

ARISTOTLE'S CATEGORIES
AND
PORPHYRY

PHILOSOPHIA ANTIQUA

A SERIES OF STUDIES
ON ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

EDITED BY

W.J. VERDENIUS AND J.C.M. VAN WINDEN

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CHRISTOS EVANGELIOU
ARISTOTLE'S CATEGORIES
AND
PORPHYRY



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BY

CHRISTOS EVANGELIOU

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To my Father
and the memory of my Mother

Πολλοὶ πολλὰς κατεβάλοντο φροντίδας εἰς τὸ τῶν κατηγοριῶν τοῦ
Ἀριστοτέλους βιβλίον.

Simplicius (CAG, VIII, 1, 1-2)

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PROLOGUE

Aristotle's doctrine of categories is important for the history of Hellenic and Western philosophy. He used it skilfully for reformulating and resolving many traditional problems of logical, ontological, epistemological and ethical import. In his hands the doctrine also became a powerful tool for criticizing the Presocratics and the Academics. The latter remained divided in their opinions about it to the end of the third century A.D.

Plotinus was the last Platonist to criticize Aristotle's categories, especially in their ontological pretensions. Ironically, it was Porphyry, Plotinus' most brilliant disciple, who put an end to the prolonged controversy about the merit of Aristotle's categorial doctrine by favorably commenting on it. Thereafter, the doctrine became part of the Neoplatonic School curriculum. In this respect, Porphyry initiated a new policy of reconciliation between Platonism and Aristotelianism.

This work is a systematic study of Porphyry's interpretation of Aristotle's doctrine of categories. In view of Plotinus's sharp criticism of it, Porphyry's sympathetic treatment of this doctrine appears problematic. By textual analysis and critical argument, this study attempts to elucidate the question of how and why the two philosophers differ in their approaches to the problem which Aristotle's categories presented to them.

The book is a revision of my doctoral dissertation which was accepted by the Philosophy Department at Emory University. To improve the original, I have incorporated the following changes: I updated and expanded the bibliography; instead of MacKenna's translation of the *Enneads*, I used Professor Armstrong's new and more accurate translation (he kindly allowed me to use his completed but unpublished translation of *Ennead* VI, for which I am grateful); I used, occasionally, Professor Apostle's translation of the *Categories*, instead of Ackrill's which I followed in the main; I provided my own version of some difficult passages (parallel to theirs), when neither appeared satisfactory; I tried to keep the discussion close to the original texts and chiefly between the protagonists, Aristotle, Porphyry, Plotinus, Plato and the ancient commentators. The perceptive reader, I trust, will not fail to see the relevance of those commentaries to modern scholarly debates regarding Aristotle's categories.

The list of people who helped me in one way or another during the long period of the execution of this project is lengthy. To those who read the entire manuscript or heard parts of it read in professional meetings

and kindly gave me their valuable comments, wise suggestions, and/or constructive criticisms, I am grateful. The list includes the following Professors: J. Anton, N. Fotion, I. Leclerc, Th. Flynn, J. Gouinlock, W. Edwards, R. Makkreel, and P. Kuntz, (all at Emory University at that time), R.B. Harris, A. Preus, J. Findlay, J. Rist, Father Owens, R. Turnbull, J. Dillon, M. Wagner, L. Bargeliotes, E. Moutsopoulos, and K. Boudouris, (the last three at the University of Athens, Greece).

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Philadelphia,
December 1986

Christos Evangeliou

ABBREVIATIONS

Used for Journals, Commentaries and Reference Works

AAC	<i>Ammonii in Aristotelis Categorias commentarius</i>
AGP	<i>Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie</i>
AJP	<i>American Journal of Philosophy</i>
AP	<i>Ancient Philosophy</i>
APQ	<i>American Philosophical Quarterly</i>
CAG	<i>Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca</i>
CP	<i>Classical Philology</i>
CQ	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
CR	<i>Classical Review</i>
DAC	<i>Dexippi in Aristotelis Categorias commentarium</i>
EAC	<i>Eliae in Aristotelis Categorias commentarium</i>
H	<i>Hermes</i>
IA	<i>Index Aristotelicus</i>
IPQ	<i>International Philosophical Quarterly</i>
JHI	<i>Journal of the History of Ideas</i>
JHP	<i>Journal of the History of Philosophy</i>
JP	<i>Journal of Philosophy</i>
LP	<i>Sleeman and Pollet's Lexicon Plotinianum</i>
LS	<i>Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon</i>
M	<i>Mind</i>
MH	<i>Museum Helveticum</i>
NS	<i>New Scholasticism</i>
OAC	<i>Olympiodori in Aristotelis Categorias commentarium</i>
P	<i>Phronesis</i>
PAS	<i>Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society</i>
PAC	<i>Porphyrii in Aristotelis Categorias commentarium</i>
PhAC	<i>Philoponi in Aristotelis Categorias commentarium</i>
PQ	<i>Philosophical Quarterly</i>
PPR	<i>Philosophy and Phenomenological Research</i>
PR	<i>Philosophical Review</i>
RE	<i>Real Encyclopädie</i> , by Pauly-Wissowa
REA	<i>Revue des Études Augustiniennes</i>
REG	<i>Revue des Études Grecques</i>
RhM	<i>Rheinisches Museum</i>
RM	<i>Review of Metaphysics</i>
RPL	<i>Revue Philosophique de Louvain</i>
SAC	<i>Simplicii in Aristotelis Categorias commentarium</i>
TAPA	<i>Transactions of American Philological Association</i>

Note: All secondary sources given in the bibliography have been numbered to avoid repetition and reduce the length of the book. References are made by citing the author's name, the number of his/her book or article, and the page or pages referred to, e.g., A. H. Armstrong [17], p. 86.

INTRODUCTION

1. *Porphyry the Philosopher*

The most distinguished disciple of Plotinus, his editor and close friend, was without doubt Porphyry.¹ Porphyry was born in Tyre² in 232/233 A.D.³, that is, the same year in which Plotinus entered Ammonius' School in Alexandria.⁴ It seems that Porphyry spent half of his life in studying and writing and the other half in writing and teaching.⁵

Through his early studies in his native land, he became familiar with many Chaldean, Egyptian, Christian and Gnostic mystery doctrines. Later, he went to Athens to study with Longinus, the famous Platonist, and other notable philosophers, mathematicians and rhetoricians of that time.⁶ In 263 A.D., while in his thirties and still thirsty for more wisdom, he left Athens for Rome where Plotinus had established his own School of philosophy about twenty years earlier.⁷ It did not take long for the intelligent young Porphyry to win the favor of the great philosopher. In his *Vita Plotini* (18), Porphyry alludes to the first impressions and dif-

¹ Πορφύριος is the name which he uses for himself in *Vita* 2, 33; 4, 2, and *passim*. Besides this name, his friends used two other names for him: Μάλκος and Βασιλεύς, both of which mean "king" in his native language and in Greek respectively (*Ibid.* 17, 5-15). For further biographical information about Porphyry, see Eunapius [102], pp. 352-360; Beutler [393], pp. 276-278, Lloyd [18], pp. 272-330, Holstenius [146], Wolff [357], and Bidez [35] *passim*.

² Porphyry, as well as his friends, referred to himself as Τύριος (*Vita* 7, 51), but his Christian opponents called him Βατανεώτην, presumably in reference to his family roots in Batanea which Bidez described as a "region barbare situee aux confins du Hauran actual" [35], p. 5.

³ This date is easily calculated from Porphyry's testimony that "In the tenth year of the reign of Gallienus, I, Porphyry arrived from Greece with Antonius of Rhodes. . . . In the tenth year of the reign of Gallienus Plotinus was about fifty-nine years old. I, Porphyry, when I joined him was thirty" (*Vita* 4, 1-10).

⁴ In *Vita* 3, 7-13, we read: "In his twenty-eighth year he felt the impulse to study philosophy and was recommended to the teachers in Alexandria who then had the highest reputation. . . . He went and heard him [Ammonius], and said to his friend, 'This is the man I was looking for.'"

⁵ According to Eunapius, [102], p. 357, "Porphyry returned to Rome [after Plotinus' death] and continued to study philosophical disputation, so that he even appeared in public to make a display of his powers; but every forum and every crowd attributed to Plotinus the credit of Porphyry's renown." Also, Bidez [35], p. 103, asserts that "A son tour, il devint chef d'école."

⁶ For the identification of his teachers, see Beutler [393], pp. 276-277. In Eunapius' judgment, "τὴν ἄκρην ἐπαιδεύετο παιδείαν," [102], p. 354.

⁷ Plotinus went to Rome in 244 A.D. at the age of forty, after Philip the Arab had become Emperor, *Vita* 3, 24-26.

ficulties that he had in adjusting to the new intellectual milieu. He says, for instance:

His [Plotinus'] lectures were like conversations, and he was not quick to make clear to anybody the compelling logical coherence of his discourse. I, Porphyry, experienced something of the sort when I first heard him.

It appears that Longinus and Plotinus were competing teachers of philosophy and had no great respect for each other.⁸ They certainly held divergent views with regard to the fundamental (for the Neoplatonists) problem of the status of τὰ νοητά (intelligibles). Briefly stated the question was this: Are the νοητά outside or inside νοῦς? If inside, are they identical with the Intellect or not? On this subject, Plotinus wrote a treatise (V. 5.) to support the thesis that τὰ νοητά are inside νοῦς and identical with it.⁹ As a resident at the School of Plotinus, Porphyry found himself in the uncomfortable position of having to defend what he had learned from Longinus on this matter. But he had to abandon his previous views, after they had been repeatedly refuted by his friend and colleague Amelius who wrote under Plotinus' supervision. He describes the episode as follows:

The result was that I wrote against him [Plotinus] in an attempt to show that the objects of thought existed outside the intellect. He made Amelius read this essay to him, and when the reading was finished smiled and said "You shall have the task of solving these difficulties Amelius. He has fallen into them because he does not know what we hold." Amelius wrote a lengthy treatise "In Answer to Porphyry's Difficulties;" I replied to what he had written; Amelius answered my reply; and the third time I with difficulty understood the doctrine, changed my mind and wrote a recantation which I read in the meeting of the school. After this I believed in Plotinus' writings, and tried to rouse in the master himself the ambition to organize his doctrine and write it down more at length; and I also stimulated Amelius' desire to write books.¹⁰

⁸ To Plotinus, Longinus was perhaps a philologist "but certainly not a philosopher" (*Vita* 14, 19-20); whereas Longinus seems to have misjudged Plotinus' books because, as Porphyry says, "he did not understand Plotinus' usual manner of expressing himself" (*Ibid.* 20, 5-10).

⁹ On this controversy, see Proclus [250], I, p. 322, 24, Lloyd [18], pp. 286-7, and Dillon [88], pp. 95ff.

¹⁰ This is the only reported case of open confrontation between Porphyry and Plotinus. But there is no doubt that Porphyry had many ἀπορίαι on many subjects which gave Plotinus much headache and a stimulus for discourse, as the following passage clearly indicates: "Once, I, Porphyry, went on asking him for three days about the soul's connection with the body, and he kept on explaining to me. A man called Thaumasius came in who was interested in general statements and said that he wanted to hear Plotinus speaking in the manner of a set treatise, but could not stand Porphyry's questions and answers. Plotinus said, 'But if when Porphyry asks questions we do not solve his difficulties [ἀπορίαι] we shall not be able to say anything to put into the treatise'" (*Vita* 13, 11-18). Incidentally, this passage also indicates that Plotinus followed the Socratic dialectic as the correct method of teaching. For pedagogical purposes, Porphyry employed the same technique in his extant elementary commentary on Aristotle's *Categories* which is "κατὰ πεῦσιν καὶ ἀπόχρισιν," PAC, p. 55.

Porphry spent about five years in Plotinus' School. This was a critical period in his life. The difficulties which he faced during this period and the intensity with which he grappled with deep philosophical problems made him sick and melancholic. Following Plotinus' advice, we are told, he took a trip to charming Sicily to recover in 268.¹¹ Plotinus died two years later and they did not see each other again.

After Plotinus' death, Porphyry returned to Rome where he distinguished himself as a philosopher and commentator. He also collected, corrected, ordered, and edited the *Enneads* on which Plotinus' fame was to rest and last thereafter.¹² This edition appeared only a few years before Porphyry's death which probably occurred in the first decade of the fourth century A.D.¹³ It seems that the Neoplatonic School in Rome died with him.¹⁴ Less than a generation later Rome itself ceased to be the capital of the empire and Constantinople (the New Rome) took its place.¹⁵ It was in the East (Alexandria, Athens, and Syria in particular where Longinus, Amelius and later Porphyry's pupil, Iamblichus, were active) that new philosophical schools were to appear and flourish for three more centuries until Justinian thought them threatening to the Christian faith and officially closed them down in 529 A.D.

The most curious part of this biographical information is perhaps Porphyry's trip to Sicily. The story of his illness seems, under the circumstances, reasonable and it may very well be true.¹⁶ To suppose that

¹¹ In fact, he went to Lilybaeum where "a distinguished man called Probus was living" (*Vita* 11, 16-18).

¹² "I myself, Porphyry of Tyre, was one of Plotinus's [sic] closest friends, and he entrusted me the editing of his writings" (*Vita* 7, 50-52). See also 24, 1-18, where he explains the method which he followed in preparing the edition. About Plotinus' debt to Porphyry, Harris [136], pp. 8-9, writes: "However, if it had not been for Porphyry, who was able to express his rather abstruse ideas in more palatable form, his philosophy may not have survived at all."

¹³ Armstrong [18], p. 216, accepts Harder's view that the edition was made in 301 A.D. The exact date of Porphyry's death is unknown. Eunapius [102], p. 360, says that Porphyry reached "Ἰθάκη βαθύ." Beutler [393], p. 278, places it between 301 and 305, which is reasonable.

¹⁴ The so-called Neoplatonic School in Rome, was actually a group of intelligent young men who had been attracted by Plotinus' reputation and seem to have been dispersed during his illness which led to his death (*Vita* 2). Upon his return to Rome, Porphyry presumably made an effort to regroup them and attract others, but the details of his effort remain uncertain.

¹⁵ Officially this happened in 330 A.D., when Constantine the Great transferred the seat of the empire from Rome to the old city of Byzantium which was to be renamed after him.

¹⁶ In *Vita* 11, 12-16, we read: "He once noticed that I, Porphyry, was thinking of removing myself from life. He came to me unexpectedly while I was staying indoors in my house and told me that this lust for death did not come from a settled rational decision but from a bilious indisposition, and urged me to go away for a holiday. I obeyed him and went to Sicily. . . ." This story is told with relation to Plotinus' ability to read other people's minds. It is also given as an explanation of Porphyry's absence from Plotinus' death. But Elias, in his commentary on the *Isagoge* (p. 39), reports that the reason of Porphyry's trip to Sicily was his desire to explore the volcano of Aetna.

this story possibly conceals a disagreement between Porphyry and Plotinus with regard to the correct approach to the problem of Aristotle's categories is daring, but it can be supported on the following grounds.

First, it may be noted that Porphyry's sickness and departure from Rome came just at the time when Plotinus had completed his long treatise *On the Genera of Being*¹⁷ in which he criticized Aristotle's categorial doctrine very sharply. By that time Porphyry had been in the School for five years and knew the master well. He perhaps had come to accept Plotinus as an authority on Plato and respected him for that, as is evident from the *Vita Plotini* 22 (where Porphyry quotes an oracle to the effect that Plotinus' soul enjoys the company of Plato and Pythagoras). But it would be difficult to imagine that he considered Plotinus as an authority on Aristotle also, whom Porphyry had studied well in Athens and appreciated. He was mature enough by now not to change his mind as easily as he had done earlier when they disagreed over νοητά. Since Plotinus was too old to change his mind about Aristotle's categories, Porphyry perhaps thought it wise to find an excuse (sickness) and leave the School. In Sicily the "sick" Porphyry did not rest. He worked hard and produced some of his best known and influential treatises.¹⁸

Second, from the time he went to Sicily Porphyry seems to have emancipated himself from the overwhelming influence of Plotinus. He asserted his position by writing the *Isagoge* and by preparing commentaries on Aristotle's *Categories*.¹⁹ The same doctrine which Plotinus had so severely criticized in VI. 1. and considerably modified in VI. 2., Porphyry accepted and defended *in toto*, as we shall see. Being fully aware of his disagreement with Plotinus on this important issue, he systematically avoided mentioning Plotinus by name in his commentary where we find the names of many other philosophers who had declared *pro* or *con* Aristotle's categories.²⁰

¹⁷ Porphyry says that at the time of his arrival at the School in 263, Plotinus had written twenty-one treatises. When he left in 268, twenty-four more treatises had been added. In the chronological list, VI. 1., VI. 2., and VI. 3. are numbered as 42, 43, and 44, which indicates that Porphyry's departure coincided with Plotinus' criticism of Aristotle's categories. This may be a coincidence but, if my hypothesis is correct, it may be more than that.

¹⁸ According to Professor Lloyd, [18], p. 284, "The Sicilian period is more important to us for Porphyry's own philosophy." I think that this is a correct statement. To the Sicilian period belong, *inter alia*, the *Isagoge*, *Against the Christians*, his commentaries on several treatises of the *Organon*, and possibly other Aristotelian treatises. For a complete list of his works of that period, see Bidez [35], pp. 51-64.

¹⁹ The exact dates of these commentaries are not known. But, in the light of note No. 18 above, it would be reasonable to suppose that they were written in Sicily or in Rome after his return, viz. after 270 A.D.

²⁰ E.g. Atticus, Boethus, Herminus, Cornutus, and Athenodorus (p. 59ff).

Third, Porphyry's literary output during this Sicilian period is characteristically *pro* Aristotelian and *anti* Christian.²¹ Far from being unrelated or irrelevant, the two subjects seem to provide the key to what is problematic about Porphyry's relation to Plotinus and Aristotle, especially the doctrine of categories. If we assume that Porphyry recognized, more clearly than Plotinus, that the real enemy of Platonism (and by extension Hellenism) was neither Aristotelianism nor Stoicism but Christian (and non-Christian) Gnosticism, then we can clearly see why he was not pleased with Plotinus' tactics and why he tried hard to reconcile Plato and Aristotle. The intellectual forces of Hellenism, as he understood it, could not afford to be divided at the time when Barbarism (as he thought of both Gnosticism and Christianity) was on the offensive.²²

Fourth, while living in Sicily, Porphyry received a letter from Longinus, who had by then moved to Palmyra, asking him to return home (as Amelius had done) and bring with him the books of Plotinus (*Vita* 19). Given the fact that Longinus had disapproved of Porphyry's apostasy or "change of mind" regarding the place of Ideas,²³ it is not unreasonable to construe his invitation to Porphyry at this particular time as encouraged by a temporary split in the relationship of Plotinus and Porphyry. Plotinus' death and Porphyry's return to Rome seem to have put an end to the conflict (if there ever was such a conflict) between the two philosophers. As time went on, Porphyry strove to reconcile his admiration for Plotinus (and his theory of Hypostases) with his respect for Aristotle (and his doctrine of categories). This was not an impossible task for the philosopher who had written *On the Unity of Plato's and Aristotle's Philosophy*.²⁴

²¹ Bidez [35], pp. 52-64. In *Vita* 16, Porphyry gives a summary of the activities of Plotinus and his associates in combatting the Christian (and other forms of) Gnosticism. I have discussed this issue in my "Plotinus' Anti-Gnostic Polemic and Porphyry's *Against the Christians*," to be published in *Neoplatonism and Gnosticism*, J. Bregman, ed., University of Maine (forthcoming).

²² It is evident from *Vita* 21, that Porphyry also tried to reconcile Plotinus and Longinus.

²³ Here is how Longinus viewed Porphyry's apostasy, as quoted in *Vita* 20, 90-95: "For my friend and theirs, Basileus of Tyre [i.e. Porphyry], who has himself written a good deal in the manner of Plotinus, whose direction he has preferred to my own, tried to demonstrate in a treatise that the doctrine of Plotinus about the Ideas was better than that which I approve. I think I showed fairly thoroughly in my reply that his change of mind was a mistake."

²⁴ The title of the non-extant treatise as given by Suidas reads: Περὶ τοῦ μίαν εἶναι τὴν Πλάτωνος καὶ Ἀριστοτέλους αἴρεσιν, in Bidez [35], p. 68 (Appendices). Whether or not this is the same treatise as the one reported by Elias in his commentary on the *Isagoge*, Περὶ διαστάσεως Πλάτωνος καὶ Ἀριστοτέλους, is debatable. See Beutler [393], p. 285. The emphasis here is presumably on αἵρεσις, on which see *Ennead* II. 9., *passim*, and *Vita* 16, in connection to Christian Gnostics who were perceived by the Platonists as "heretics." See also Hadot [473].

Be that as it may, the fact remains that in later antiquity Porphyry's reputation as a learned man, a renowned philosopher, a formidable opponent of Christianity and a champion of Hellenism, persisted among educated Pagans and Christians alike.²⁵ For example, Simplicius thought of him as "the source of all good things to us," while St. Augustine referred to him, *inter alia*, as *doctissimus philosophorum* who had improved "upon both Plato and Plotinus."²⁶ Owing to his excellent training at Longinus' School in Athens, Porphyry's style, unlike Plotinus', was very lucid and praised by Eunapius as follows:

Plotinus, because of the celestial quality of his soul and the oblique and enigmatic character of his discourses, seemed austere and hard to listen to. But Porphyry, like a chain of Hermes let down to mortals, by reason of his many-sided culture expounded all subjects so as to be clear and easy of comprehension. . . . And while some philosophers hide their esoteric teachings in obscurity, as poets conceal theirs in myths, Porphyry praised clear knowledge as the sovereign remedy, and since he had tasted it by experience he recorded this in writing and brought it to the light of day.²⁷

Porphyry was also a prolific writer who, like Aristotle, wrote treatises on almost every conceivable subject matter (historical, literary, scientific, philological, religious, psychological, allegorical, ethical, logical and metaphysical).²⁸ Seventy-seven titles of treatises ascribed to him have survived.²⁹ But, above all, Porphyry excelled as a commentator and became famous for his commentaries. Not to mention Homer, whom Porphyry esteemed as a great "philosopher" of Hellenism, he commented on the *Enneads*,³⁰ on Platonic Dialogues of the middle and late periods,³¹ and on several Aristotelian works.³² It is really regrettable that

²⁵ SAC, p. 2, 5-6; Simplicius also used such superlatives as φιλοσοφώτατος and πολυμαθέστατος in reference to Porphyry [297], pp. 95, 33 and 151, 53.

²⁶ *De Civitate Dei*, XIX.xxii; and X.xxx where we read: "Plato said in writing that after death souls of men return to earth in a circle and pass even into bodies of animals. This theory was held by Plotinus also, the teacher of Porphyry, but Porphyry was right to reject it" (the translation is that of the Loeb Classical Library). For Porphyry's influence on St. Augustine via Victorinus, see Hadot's thorough discussion in the first volume of [132], Te Selle [616], and my "Porphyry's Attack on the Church and Its Echo in St. Augustine," in *Collectanea Augustiniana*, Proceedings of the 1986 PMR Conference, J.C. Schnaubelt, ed., Villanova University (forthcoming).

²⁷ Eunapius [102], p. 356.

²⁸ For the titles and the thematic arrangement of Porphyry's works, see Beutler [393], pp. 276-313, and Bidez [35], pp. 65-73 (Appendices).

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ According to *Vita* 26, Porphyry's edition of the *Enneads* was accompanied by commentaries and summaries which he had prepared upon the request of his friends.

³¹ The list includes *Phaedo*, *Philebus*, *Cratylus*, *Republic*, *Sophist*, *Timaeus*, and possibly *Parmenides*, if Hadot's hypothesis, [132], vol. I, *passim*, is correct.

³² Besides *Categories* and other logical treatises, the list includes *Ethics*, *Physics*, and *Metaphysics*.

of all this great wealth only fragments have been preserved for us (which may have something to do with his expressed anti-Christian attitude). The small (politically neutral but philosophically influential) treatise of *Εἰσαγωγή* is the only work of his which is extant in a complete form.³³

2. *The Problem of Aristotle's Categories*

It is characteristic of Porphyry's attitude towards Aristotle, especially his categorial theory, that he wrote two commentaries on *Categories*. The one, which was addressed to Gedalios, was long and systematic, but it is no longer extant. It has been reported by no less an authority than Simplicius that in that commentary Porphyry successfully responded to all objections raised by Platonist and Stoic critics of Aristotle's categories.³⁴ The other commentary was shorter, written in a Socratic question-answer format for pedagogical purposes, and has been preserved, though in an incomplete form. It is this extant commentary, as well as the fragments of the lost one, which will be primarily utilized in this study.

By examining Porphyry's views in a critical manner, and by comparing them with Plotinus' criticisms of Aristotle as expounded in VI. 1. and 3., it will become clear, I hope, how and why the two philosophers differ in their respective approaches to the problem of the Aristotelian categories, and in what sense the pupil was not as pure a Platonist as the teacher was. It is by no means true that Porphyry was simply Plotinus' follower and popularizer, as is usually stated in the current histories of philosophy. At least with regard to Aristotle's categories, the two philosophers clearly disagreed. Porphyry's purpose, in writing his commentaries, was to interpret the Aristotelian doctrine of categories in such a way as to make it compatible with Platonism and acceptable to Neoplatonic Schools.

If my hypothesis is correct, it would seem that the problem of Aristotle's categories was faced in a dramatic way within Plotinus's intellectual inner circle by the two leading members of the School with important consequences for the history of Hellenic, and by extension European and Western, philosophy. In all probability, this was not the only issue on which Porphyry and Plotinus held divergent views, but it was perhaps the most important.³⁵ For their disagreement on this subject can be seen

³³ *De Antro Nympharum* is perhaps another exception. *De Abstinencia, Sententiae, Ad Marcellam, Philosophus Historia*, the extant commentary and a few others have been preserved in part only.

³⁴ SAC, p. 2 and p. 10.

³⁵ For other points of disagreement between the two philosophers, see Armstrong [18], pp. 264-268 and 287-293; Smith [300], pp. 69-83 and 145-151; Hadot [132], volume I *passim*; and Clark [412], pp. 265-273.

as the last phase of a prolonged debate among the Platonists with regard to Aristotle's doctrine of categories. This debate can be traced back to the first century B.C., when Andronicus of Rhodes collected and edited Aristotle's treatises for the first time. After Andronicus' edition, the *Categories* became and remained for the next six centuries one of the central themes of philosophical discussion and the favorite subject of commentaries by Peripatetics, Stoics and Platonists alike. In this light, the statement by which Simplicius (6th A.D.) opened his commentary should be read not as hyperbole, but as historical fact: "Πολλοὶ πολλὰς κατεβάλλοντο φροντίδας εἰς τὸ τῶν Κατηγοριῶν τοῦ Ἀριστοτέλους βιβλίον."³⁶

It seems that the Platonists were divided all along into two groups on this issue until the time of Porphyry who put an end to this conflict. Those who followed the skeptical trend of the New Academy were critical of Aristotle's categories and his logic in general. On the other hand, those who followed the eclectic Antiochus of Ascalon did not object to Aristotle's logic and his categories in particular. The typical representatives of these two tendencies were Atticus and Albinus respectively.³⁷

The Platonists who tended to accept Aristotle's categories had to justify their choice and they did so by claiming that it was possible to find the entire set implicit in the Platonic dialogues. Thus, for example, Plutarch found Plato's "categories" hidden in *Timaeus* (35bff); an anonymous commentary preferred *Theaetetus* (152dff); Albinus sought them in *Parmenides* (136aff), but he, like Philo of Alexandria, subordinated them to the "more general Old Academic categories of Absolute and Relative."³⁸ Last but not least, Plotinus appealed to Plato's μέγιστα γένη in the *Sophist* (254dff) as the real rivals of the Aristotelian categories which he interpreted as "genera of Being," to use his favorite expression.³⁹

Plotinus' attitude towards Aristotle's categories should be seen in the light of the following considerations in order to be placed in the proper historical perspective. First, like many other Platonists before him, Plotinus sincerely believed that Plato had a theory of genera which was more adequate and, therefore, preferable to Aristotle's "genera." Second, unlike other Platonists who had located Plato's "categories" in

³⁶ SAC, p. 1, 1-2, "Many have undertaken many enquiries into Aristotle's book on categories" (translation mine). Andronicus of Rhodes was not only the first editor of the *Categories*, but also its first commentator (SAC, p. 26, 17) and, of course, the series of commentators did not end with Simplicius (PAC, pp. xxxv-xlvi).

³⁷ Armstrong [18], pp. 53-85; Dillon [88], pp. 248-256.

³⁸ Dillon [88], p. 279, which I followed in this section.

³⁹ Characteristically, the treatise in which Plotinus criticizes the Aristotelian and the Stoic categories, that is, VI. 1-3, is titled Περὶ τῶν γενῶν τοῦ ὄντος, with the reservations of *Vita* 4, 1-22.

other dialogues and thought them more or less compatible with the Aristotelian categories, Plotinus thought of Aristotle's "genera" as incompatible with the Platonic genera which he had found, explicitly and elaborately treated, in the *Sophist*. Third, his approach to Aristotle's categories or, rather, "genera" is twofold: (1) insofar as κόσμος νοητός is concerned, they are completely inadequate, inapplicable and irrelevant (VI. 1.), in contrast to Plato's genera (VI. 2.); (2) insofar as κόσμος αἰσθητός is concerned, they may be considered somewhat useful for ordinary discourse but, even so, they are in need of modification and drastic reduction (VI. 3). Fourth, regardless of whether or not this kind of criticism is fair to Aristotle and to his purpose in advancing the categorial doctrine, the fact remains that Plotinus' criticism is consistent with the metaphysical presuppositions of Platonism in terms of its emphasis on the intelligible and the universal as opposed to the particular and the sensible. And if so, then Porphyry's bold attempt to blend the Aristotelian logic of categories with the Platonic-Plotinian ontology appears to be interesting indeed, but very problematic.

How successful Porphyry was in his efforts and what tactics he employed towards his set goal are legitimate questions the possible illumination of which is the sole justification of the present study. When we reach the last chapter, a complete answer may emerge. In a preliminary manner, the following statements can be safely made. Unlike other Platonists (who accepted Aristotle's categories on the grounds that either they were found in Plato's writings or they had been sufficiently modified and platonized), Porphyry was prepared to accept the Aristotelian categorial doctrine without any reference to Plato. He thought that he could defend it as it stood without any Platonic modification or qualification. Furthermore, since he did not share Plotinus's ontological interpretation of Aristotle's categories, Porphyry was able to avoid his teacher's negative criticisms of the categorial doctrine. He advanced a new interpretation according to which the categories are to be considered not as γένη τοῦ ὄντος, as Plotinus had said, but as ἀπλαῖ σημαντικαὶ φωναὶ (i.e. simple significant articulate sounds), as he emphasized.⁴⁰

In order to further clarify this point, the following remarks may be helpful. In his two commentaries on the *Categories*, Porphyry not only defended the categorial doctrine as expounded by Aristotle in that treatise, but also specifically rejected as untenable the view which identified the categories with (Platonic or un-Platonic) "genera of Being."⁴¹

⁴⁰ PAC, pp. 57-58. More about this, in Chapters Two and Three.

⁴¹ PAC, pp. 56, 14-57, 16.

The implication of Porphyry's position is that, with all due respect, Plotinus' approach was mistaken in at least two counts: (1) in applying Aristotle's categories (which, in Porphyry's view, were intended to account for the natural world) to the intelligible and supernatural realm and, then, criticizing them as inapplicable; (2) in comparing (illegitimately, it would seem) Aristotle's ten categories (which in Porphyry's interpretation are simple *voces*) with Plato's five genera which are, ontologically speaking, heavily charged (i.e. ὄντως ὄντα).

Plotinus was not mistaken, evidently, when he considered Aristotle's categories in their functionings within the sensible realm but, in Porphyry's opinion, neither he nor other critics could possibly be correct in their attempts to reduce the number of categories from ten to five and to introduce new non-Aristotelian categories to the Aristotelian set. Porphyry thought it possible to accept Aristotle's categories as they were, without any Platonic reductions and Stoic modifications, as we will see. He also believed that it is pointless to criticize Aristotle from a Platonic point of view and *vice versa*, whereas one can keep them in harmony by assigning different regions of expertise and prestige to each of them. Let us, Porphyry seems to suggest, give this world to the Peripatetic logic and preserve the "Other" world for the Platonic ontology, and we will see Plotinus' perplexing problem dissolving itself.⁴² What would happen to logic as a result of such separation from ontology is, of course, another and much deeper philosophical question.

3. *Scope and Method of the Study*

The scope of this book is limited. It is intended as a systematic study of Porphyry's defense of Aristotle's categories, in view of the fact that Plotinus had sharply criticized them. Its basic purpose is to clarify the nature of their disagreement on the important question of the merit and the correct interpretation of Aristotle's categorial doctrine. The thesis which the study will attempt to establish can be summarized in the following points: First, that Porphyry did not follow Plotinus, in spite of his great respect for his teacher, in his deliberate way of criticizing Aristotle's categories; second, that Porphyry was determined to accept Aristotle's authority in matters of logic, though he wanted to remain a Platonist in matters of ontology; third, that the Neoplatonic synthesis of Platonism and Aristotelianism in its final form owes perhaps more to Porphyry than to Plotinus; fourth, that from the debate on Aristotle's categorial doctrine

⁴² Hence the nicknames of the two philosophers which were in circulation during the Middle Ages, *Aristoteles logicus* and *Plato theologus*.

within Plotinus' School, Porphyry emerged victorious in the sense that his interpretation prevailed in the subsequent centuries; fifth, that it is incorrect to consider Neoplatonism as a monolithic philosophical movement and, in particular, to see Porphyry as nothing more but the editor and popularizer of the Plotinian doctrines; sixth, that Aristotle's categories presented the Neoplatonists of Plotinus' School with a problem which they considered philosophically important, judging by the portion of their work which they devoted to it;⁴³ seventh, that the historical significance of Porphyry's solution to the problem of Aristotle's categories lies in the fact that it put an end to a long debate among the Platonists and, for good or ill, determined the destiny of this Aristotelian doctrine to the present day.⁴⁴

The eagerness of Porphyry to reconcile Plato and Aristotle was, in all probability, influenced by his perception of Gnosticism and third-century Christianity as serious threats to Hellenism. In this respect, it would seem that the disagreement of Porphyry and Plotinus on the problem of Aristotle's categories cannot be correctly appreciated unless it is seen within the parameters which determined Porphyry's career as a champion of Hellenism. But, strictly speaking, these broader issues lie outside the limited scope of this study.

The goals of this study will be met by engaging in critical examination and close textual analysis of the relevant texts. They include: Aristotle's *Categories*, Porphyry's extant *Commentary* on it, and Plotinus' *Enneads*, especially VI. 1-3. Since the purpose of this study is to provide neither a historical account of Aristotle's categories nor a comprehensive treatment of Plotinus' metaphysics, but to discuss and clarify the specific problem which the Aristotelian categorial doctrine presented to Porphyry in his relation to Plotinus, it will concentrate on the original texts and, for the most part, let the protagonists speak for themselves with only a few comments or references to secondary sources.

With regard to the *Categories*, a glance at the bibliography will show that the number of books and articles relating to it is very large. In the main, I have followed Professor Ackrill's translation and commentary, except for a very few cases where I thought that Apostle's translation was more accurate or decided to provide my own version in light of the

⁴³ The fact that Porphyry wrote two commentaries on the *Categories* (not to mention *Isagoge* which many scholars have considered an introduction to it) and that Plotinus devoted "12 per cent of his written work" (in Armstrong's estimation [18], p. 114; in P. Henry's [485], p. 234, is even more "un septième de son oeuvre écrite") to the criticism of the categorial doctrine clearly indicates the great importance of this problem for the Neoplatonists.

⁴⁴ More about the importance of Porphyry's "inclusive interpretation" and its affinities to modern exegesis will come up in Part One, Chapter One, section (4).

ancient commentary tradition when neither of the above seemed satisfactory. I have made references to other ancient commentaries or to modern and contemporary debates on various aspects of the categorial doctrine only to the extent that such references could, retrospectively, shed some light on the problems with which Porphyry and Plotinus had to grapple. With regard to the part of the *Enneads* which concerns us here, that is, VI. 1-3, the bibliography is scarce, especially in English.⁴⁵ This fact may have something to do with the verdict of no less an authority on matters Neoplatonic than the late W.R. Inge, who found this part “the most obscure and the least attractive” of Plotinus’s entire book.⁴⁶ Of course, there are some exceptions, the most notable of which is A.C. Lloyd’s excellent study on “Neoplatonic Logic and Aristotelian Logic, I/II” to which I will refer frequently.⁴⁷

With regard to Porphyry’s commentary there are a number of problems which I faced. To begin with, there is no English translation of it or any other commentary in the Berlin series of *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*. Therefore, I have translated all the passages that I quoted from the various commentaries on the *Categories*. Also, it is the case that this commentary has been preserved in an incomplete form, though we do not know precisely how large a part is missing or whether its author was as thorough at the end (the missing part) as he had been at the beginning. The many *lacunae* in the text not only make the translation difficult, but also render the correct understanding of Porphyry’s position problematic.⁴⁸ To compensate for these defects, I have made extensive use of other commentaries which are better preserved, especially those of Dexippus and Simplicius who followed Porphyry closely.⁴⁹ In many cases the important Greek terms and expressions, on which a specific argument is built or a controversy is centered, have been provided in the original as well, while the most common of them sometimes have not been translated at all.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ In other languages we have the excellent works by Rutten [281], Wurm [360], Hoppe [147], Nebel [223] and [561], and Hager [474].

⁴⁶ Inge [152], p. 194.

⁴⁷ I should also mention, Anton [379], Rist [167], chapter 8, and my paper [379].

⁴⁸ *Lacunae* occur on the following pages: 96, 97, 124, 125, 126, 128, 129, 131, 133, 136, 137, 140, and 142 where the commentary stops abruptly. In addition to this, I noticed (p. 75, 24-32) that an entire answer and a question have been incorporated in the previous question, surprisingly with no comment about it in the *apparatus criticus*. Also, on p. 126, 24-25, there is some discrepancy between question and answer.

⁴⁹ SAC, pp. 2ff. Dexippus follows the same format as Porphyry and gives his comments by question and answer. He differs from Porphyry in that he criticizes Plotinus by name and responds to the Plotinian objections to Aristotle’s categories point by point. As for Simplicius, he says that he followed “word for word” Iamblichus who, in turn, followed Porphyry (SAC, pp. 2-3).

⁵⁰ A glossary of Greek terms used in this study and their contextual meanings is provided in the end of the book.

The book is divided into two parts, each of which comprises three chapters. Part One deals with Porphyry's commentary. In Chapter One some important traditional questions such as the purpose of the treatise on categories, its authenticity, its correct title etc., are discussed. Chapters Two and Three are respectively devoted to the first and second parts of the treatise. In these two chapters Porphyry's comments and arguments in support of specific Aristotelian doctrines are critically examined.

Part Two deals with Plotinus' criticism of the categories. Chapter Four gives an exposition of Plotinus' negative criticism of it, as presented in VI. 1., and attempts to identify the ontological grounds of such criticism. Chapter Five is devoted to Plotinus' reduction and modification of Aristotle's categories, as presented in VI. 3., and the reasons for which he thought that such reduction was necessary. In the same chapter, the content of VI. 2., is briefly discussed and only to the extent that it is thought that it may help the understanding of Plotinus' rejection of the categories with reference to the intelligible realm and his reduction of them with reference to the sensible realm. In Chapter Six, a comparison is made between the Porphyrian exegesis and the Plotinian criticism of the Aristotelian categorial doctrine. The points of agreement as well as the points of disagreement are pulled together so that the similarities and differences between the two philosophers on this issue may become clear. The chapter closes, and the book ends, with a few critical remarks and an appraisal of the respective positions of the two philosophers.

The significance of this study is primarily historical. Its aim is to provide a new perspective and a firm basis for a better understanding of some logical and ontological problems which shaped the genesis of an important philosophical tradition, the Neoplatonic tradition. There is a need to know both what Neoplatonism was and what its relations were to classical philosophy, especially Plato and Aristotle. The present study is designed to make a contribution towards this goal by identifying and clarifying some of the problems which Aristotle's categories presented to Plotinus and Porphyry who, for different reasons, responded to this challenge in different ways.

To the extent, however, that the history of philosophy, from the Ancient Greeks (beginning with Aristotle, if not earlier) to the twentieth century (ending with Whitehead, if not later), can be read as a continuous challenge and reformulation of the categorial doctrine (with such notable peaks as Stoicism, Neoplatonism, Kantianism, Hegelianism, and Peirce's version of Pragmatism, to mention only a few of the better known), works like the present one may acquire a broader relevance for the pursuit of philosophical studies which are historically oriented. At

any rate, because interest in Aristotle's categories has been rekindled and the search for its correct interpretation has been resumed recently, it is enlightening to know what two influential philosophers of the past, Porphyry and Plotinus, had to say on this perennial problem on which they, like so many others since then, could not agree.

PART ONE

PORPHYRY ON ARISTOTLE'S CATEGORIES

CHAPTER ONE

TRADITIONAL QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE *CATEGORIES*

With regard to Aristotle's *Categories*, there are some questions which seem to have puzzled the ancient commentators. Prominent among them are (a) the question of the precise title of the treatise and (b) the question of the correct interpretation of its content. To provide satisfactory answers to these and other related questions, the ancient commentators debated them rigorously and ingeniously.

It is my intent in this chapter to inquire into these questions in order to ascertain and clarify Porphyry's position as presented in his extant *Commentary*. References to other commentaries, ancient or modern, will be made only to the extent that they may be judged helpful for a better understanding of Porphyry's views, either directly or by way of contrast.

1. *An Established Tradition*

With the possible exceptions of the *Enneads* of Plotinus, it is historically correct to state that the generation of Porphyry, like the preceding and the following ones, produced great commentaries on the philosophical works of classical antiquity. Porphyry distinguished himself not as an original thinker but as an erudite and lucid commentator on Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, and even Homer.¹

Aristotle's *Categories* is one of the philosophical treatises which attracted Porphyry's attention. By the second half of the third century A.D., the scholarly interest in this treatise had become a tradition. For after Andronicus' edition of the Aristotelian corpus in the first century B.C., the various treatises, especially that of the *Categories*, became the focus of attention and subject of commentaries and debates by philosophers with Peripatetic, Platonic, or Stoic affinities. Among them are included Andronicus of Rhodes, Boethus of Sidon, Alexander of Aphrodisias, Eudorus of Alexandria, Albinus, Atticus, Nicostratus, Lucius, Athenodorus, Herminius, and Plotinus to mention only the most prominent.²

¹ J. Bidez, [35] Appendices, pp. 65-67, gives a complete list of treatises on which Porphyry wrote commentaries.

² For an informative survey of the history of the *Categories*, I refer to Simplicius, SAC, pp. 1-3.

It seems that the *Categories* occupied a special place in the concerns of these philosophers, quite apart from their agreement or disagreement with Aristotle's categorial theory as stated in this treatise. Those who disagreed tried their best to refute it, but none of them ignored or underestimated the doctrine of the categories and its philosophical importance.³

In so far as Porphyry is concerned, it should be noted that the novelty of his approach lies partly in the fact that he felt the need to prepare two commentaries on the *Categories*.⁴ One of them was short, elementary, and had been written in a question-and-answer style probably for pedagogical purposes. It is extant but in an incomplete form. The other, which was presumably more elaborate and systematic, consisted of seven books. It was highly praised and extensively used by later commentators, like Simplicius, but it has been lost to us.⁵

According to an established tradition invariably followed by the commentators of later antiquity, that is, 5th-6th centuries A.D., for a complete commentary on any classical treatise there were at least six questions which had to be addressed. As found in the extant Neoplatonic commentaries, these questions were:

1. What is the purpose of the treatise (πρόθεσις, σκοπός)?
2. What is its usefulness (χρήσιμον)?
3. What is its place in the corpus, that is, its order (τάξις)?
4. What is its correct title (ἐπιγραφὴ) and the reason (αἰτία) for it?
5. Who is its author (συγγραφεύς)?
6. What is its proper division into parts or chapters (διαίρεσις)?⁶

The commentators after Ammonius, son of Hermeias, c. 4th-5th centuries A.D., namely Philoponus, Olympiodorus, Elias and Simplicius, seem to follow the established tradition faithfully in providing answers to the above stated questions. The same procedure was probably adopted by Porphyry in his non-extant commentary. The hypothesis that Porphyry followed this tradition in giving his answers to the above questions can be supported on the following grounds.

Simplicius answered in great detail all six questions and, in a reference to Porphyry's lost *Commentary*, he stated:

³ This attitude of the ancient commentators towards the *Categories* contrasts with the tendency of many modern scholars who seem to confine the importance of Aristotle's logic to the theory of syllogism and, therefore, tend to neglect the categorial doctrine which does not admit syllogistic treatment. See, for instance, Lukasiewicz [190], and Corcoran [72], especially pp. 85-148.

⁴ Not to mention the *Isagoge* which, incorrectly in my view, has been considered by many (from Boethius [42] to Moody [210]) as an *Introduction to the Categories*. In [438], I have argued against this supposition.

⁵ SAC, pp. 2, 7; 10, 21; 33, 4; 34, 1;

⁶ Consider, AAC, pp. 11-14; PhAC, pp. 8-10; OAC, pp. 18-25; EAC, pp. 129-134; and SAC, pp. 9-20.

Porphyry, the cause of all good things to us, prepared a complete exegesis of the book [the *Categories*] and laboriously resolved all the questions in seven books addressed to Gedalius. (SAC, p. 2, 5-8)

Simplicius' testimony carries special weight because he is a careful writer and one of the most reliable sources for our knowledge of the doctrines of Greek philosophers not only of late antiquity but also of the Presocratics.⁷ It would seem, therefore, that his evaluative judgment of Porphyry's lost *Commentary* does not leave room for doubt that Porphyry, acknowledged as "the cause of all good things" to commentators on the *Categories*, had thoroughly discussed the six traditional and relevant questions. Otherwise Simplicius' assertions that Porphyry "resolved all the questions" and gave a "complete exegesis" would make no sense.

In the extant *Commentary*, Porphyry provided answers only to questions 1 and 4 above (PAC, pp. 55-59). Given that this *Commentary* is more elementary and less systematic than the lost one, and that the two questions treated by Porphyry here are the most difficult and important ones, it is reasonable to suppose that: (a) Porphyry chose to deal briefly with these two questions in his elementary *Commentary* because he had already treated them laboriously in his extensive but non-extant *Commentary*; (b) since he had already resolved all the questions in his systematic *Commentary*, Porphyry did not think it necessary to repeat the effort in his elementary *Commentary*.

With this in mind, I shall now examine in more detail Porphyry's answers to the two questions which he treats in his extant *Commentary*: (a) What is the correct title of the treatise? (b) What is it all about, what is its purpose?

2. On the Title of the Treatise

So far as the title of the treatise on the categories is concerned, there were two issues with which the commentators had to come to grips. First, they had to provide a ground for their choice as to what the correct title was and, secondly, they had to explain why Aristotle should have given to this treatise that particular title, given the purpose which it was supposed to serve and which was open to more than one interpretation, as we will see. Unlike the other commentators who started with the question of the purpose of the treatise, Porphyry opened his *Commentary* by asking "Why did Aristotle choose to title this book *Κατηγορίαι*?" (p. 55, 1).

Porphyry had no doubt that the correct title of the treatise is *Κατηγορίαι*. But he was well aware of the fact that this was not the only

⁷ For Kirk and Raven, [166], p. 2, Simplicius is "invaluable."

title of the treatise traditionally preserved. He knew that the treatise had also been titled by earlier commentators *Τὰ πρὸ τῶν Τοπικῶν*, *Περὶ τῶν γενῶν τοῦ ὄντος*, *Περὶ τῶν δέκα γενῶν*, etc.⁸ Since each commentator had to choose one of these available titles, he had to eliminate all the others by giving reasons for his choice and his elimination of the others. And that is precisely what Porphyry attempts to do. He argues in the following way:

It would not be correct to title it *Pre-Topics*; why *Pre-Topics*, and not *Pre-Analytics* or *Pre-the-De Interpretatione-Book* instead? For learning of the categories is prerequisite to grasping the doctrines involved in the topics, the analytics, the categorical propositions and almost all the other disciplines. For this book is most elementary, and introduces the student to every branch of philosophy. Besides, it would be more appropriate to entitle it *Pre-Physics* than *Pre-Topics*, since substance, quality, and the like, are the work of nature. (p. 56, 23-29)

The importance of this passage is that it leaves no doubt that (a) Porphyry rejected the previously proposed titles *Pre-Topics* and *Pre-Analytics*;⁹ and (b) he judged the doctrines expounded in the treatise to be basic and introductory to all branches of philosophy. For Porphyry, mastering of the categorial theory must precede the grasping of the Aristotelian doctrines in the field of logic as well as any other field of philosophy. It can be said, then, that here we are provided with the reason why Porphyry felt it necessary to write not one but two commentaries on this small treatise. For him, the treatise on the categories was the key to the understanding of Aristotle's philosophy as a whole.

Having rejected in that way one of the alternative titles of the treatise, Porphyry proceeds to complete his discussion of this topic by treating the remaining competitors as follows:

In no way must one give to it the title *On the Genera of Being* or *On the Ten Genera*. For the beings and their genera, their species, and their *differentiae* are not vocal sounds but realities. Aristotle, however, after he had enumerated the ten, i.e. substance, quality, quantity, etc., stated: "None of the above is said just by itself in any affirmation, but by the combination of these with one another an affirmation is produced." Now if the combina-

⁸ In the extant commentary Porphyry does not specify who gave which title to the treatise on the categories. However, Simplicius explicitly mentions Plotinus as one of those who considered the title to be "*Περὶ τῶν γενῶν τοῦ ὄντος ἢ Περὶ τῶν δέκα γενῶν*" (SAC, p. 16,17). He also says that Adrastus of Aphrodisias, in his treatise "*Περὶ τῆς τάξεως τῆς Ἀριστοτέλους φιλοσοφίας*," had placed the *Topics* immediately after the *Categories* (p. 16, 112). Such an arrangement would have made the title *Pre-Topics* very attractive.

⁹ The tendency to title one treatise of the Aristotelian corpus by using the title of another, with the indication *πρὸ* or *μετὰ* for preceding and following respectively, was fashionable in the age of the commentators. It has survived in what we call Aristotle's *Meta-Physics* which, for Aristotle, was simply *Πρώτη Φιλοσοφία*.

tion of them produces affirmation and if the affirmation is effected by significant sounds and propositional speech, then it follows that the treatise can be neither about the genera of being nor at all about beings as such but only about vocal articulate sounds which signify them. For an affirmation is produced not by combination of the signified things but by the combination of the significant sounds which designate these things. . . . For real things are signified but do not themselves signify. (pp. 57, 34-58, 12)

Admittedly, this is not an easy passage to translate or interpret. Since it summarizes Porphyry's interpretive theory of the *Categories*, it calls for special attention and additional comments. First of all, it should be kept in mind that Porphyry's objective here is to argue against the proposals that the suitable title of the Aristotelian treatise should be either *On the Genera of Being* or *On the Ten Genera*. As will be seen later, behind this hotly debated issue about the correct title of the treatise are to be found the alternative interpretations of the categorial doctrine advanced by different philosophers and commentators. In the next section I will have the opportunity to discuss in some detail the alternative interpretive proposals. Suffice it here to emphasize that Porphyry utterly rejected both proposed titles which intended to relate the *Categories* to ontological considerations. For our purposes, this rejection is extremely important, in view of the fact that Plotinus' criticism of Aristotle's categorial doctrine is based on the thesis which identifies the categories as "genera of Being."¹⁰

Here I should like to give a brief exposition of the lines of Porphyry's reasoning in the above quoted passage. Evidently, his starting point is a remark made by Aristotle and frequently used by commentators to support the view that the treatise on the categories is not about ὄντα or πράγματα as such, but about φωναὶ σημαντικαί, that is, the articulate and significant vocal sounds which are used in meaningful discourse in order to signify, to designate, or to denote the entities which constitute the subject matter of such discourse. Specifically, Aristotle states that:

ἕκαστον δὲ τῶν εἰρημένων αὐτὸ μὲν καθ' αὐτὸ ἐν οὐδεμιᾷ καταφάσει λέγεται ἢ ἀποφάσει, τῇ δὲ πρὸς ἄλληλα τούτων συμπλοκῇ καταφάσις ἢ ἀπόφασις γίνεται.¹¹

If this is so, and if an affirmation is produced not by combining the real things but by a combination of the appropriate significant sounds which designate them, then it seems clear to Porphyry what the content of the Aristotelian treatise is and what its correct title should be. If the title is to be indicative of, and suitable to, the content of the treatise, then it can-

¹⁰ More about this important point in Chapters IV and V below.

¹¹ In Ackrill's translation: "None of the above is said just by itself in any affirmation, but by the combination of these with one another an affirmation is produced." 2a 4-6.

not be "primarily" about the "genera of Being."¹² For, according to Porphyry, the treatise was not intended to deal with the generic or the specific aspects of beings as such, but with that which designates these beings, that is, the articulate and signifying signs which the well-trained minds of human beings are capable of producing by using the human voice to express their thoughts in an effort to communicate with each other effectively.

From considerations such as these, it is evident that Porphyry tried to de-emphasize the ontological aspects of the treatise. He was aware that the strictly ontological approach to the categorial doctrine had led his teacher Plotinus to criticize it sharply.¹³ But, for reasons which will become progressively clear, he was determined to accept this treatise as well as the other Aristotelian logical works in his philosophical curriculum. This determination led Porphyry to formulate an alternative interpretation of the treatise which, in his view, was capable of rendering the Aristotelian categorial doctrine compatible with the Plotinian ontology.¹⁴ Hence his view that the Aristotelian categories are primarily simple and significant vocal sounds which signify the simplest, that is, the most generic aspects of the things and the beings which populate the sensible world.¹⁵

Granted that the reasoning of Porphyry is sound and that he has established what the correct title of the treatise should be, the question still remains: Why did Aristotle choose, if he did, the title *Κατηγορίαι* for this treatise? This question constituted the other half of the riddle which the commentators had to face with regard to the title of the treatise. According to Porphyry's explanation, we do not have here a case of ordinary usage (*χρήσις*) of the word *κατηγορία* in its literal sense of legal accusation, which is opposed to *ἀπολογία*, but rather a case of metaphorical use or "abuse" of it (*κατάχρησις*).¹⁶ Porphyry recognized this kind of "abuse"

¹² In other words, the debate here seems to have been about "priority." Is the purpose of the author of the treatise on categories to deal primarily (*προηγούμενως*) about signifying *voces* or about signified *res*? PAC, pp. 58-59.

¹³ The reasons for Plotinus' criticism will be considered in Chapter IV below. For its ontological basis, see my paper [437].

¹⁴ From the discussions in Chapters III and, especially, VI, Porphyry's strategy of keeping both Aristotle's categories and Plotinus' metaphysics will become clear. The Platonic distinction between *κόσμος νοητός* and *κόσμος αἰσθητός* will play a key role in Porphyry's solution to the problem.

¹⁵ It is significant that Porphyry stresses the importance of Aristotle's categories for the sensible realm of beings. He was well aware that Plotinus with good reasons, as we will see, had found them inadequate for the intelligible realm and had rejected them in preference for Plato's *μέγιστα γένη*.

¹⁶ The verb form which Porphyry uses here is *κατεχρήσαντο*. In PAC, p. 67, *κατάχρησις* is treated as a case of *μεταφορά*. Besides *κατηγορία*, *ἐντελέχεια* is another Aristotelian example of *κατάχρησις* discussed on pages 55-56.

as a legitimate means which the philosophers may utilize to express the unknown things which they discover in their theoretical endeavors.

In this technical sense *κατηγορία* stands for, as Porphyry put it: "Every simple significant word when it is expressed and said of the kind of thing which it signifies" (p. 56, 8-9). This definition is very broad. It encompasses all significant general terms of which the list of ten, as given by Aristotle, is but the most general. The act of predicating such terms appropriately is a *κατηγορία*.¹⁷

It remains to be explained whether *Κατηγορίαι* is the appropriate title to be given to the Aristotelian treatise. However, Porphyry thinks that this cannot be shown clearly before the *πρόθεσις* or *σκοπός* (purpose) of the book has been stated. So, let us now consider the problem of the purpose of the treatise, as viewed by him.

3. On the Purpose of the Treatise

In his attempt to answer the question regarding the purpose of the *Categories*, Porphyry succeeds in developing an important theory of language which makes him sound quite modern. He seems to recognize linguistic inquiry as one of the valuable activities of the searching mind. However, for him, it is the grammarian, not the philosopher, who has to deal with words *qua* words, their formal analysis, and classification. He puts the matter as follows:

I contend that man, in order to denote and designate the things which were lying there in front of him, used his voice to give a name to each kind of thing and make it manifest. Thus he used the words in the first place to represent each kind of thing by means of sounds and vocal signs; in this manner he called one kind of thing bench, another man, another dog and so forth . . . Having symbolically posited certain words on the things around him, man then considered the posited words for a second time, and one type of them he called nouns, another type he called verbs . . . For example, to call this particular object gold is a case of the first position of names, but to call the word 'gold' a noun is a case of the second position of names and signifies the grammatical type of this word. (pp. 57, 20-58, 3)

It is clear from this passage that Porphyry draws here a fundamental distinction between the words of first position (*πρώτη θέσις*) and the words

¹⁷ The signifying sign is called by Porphyry and other ancient commentators variably *φωνή*, *λέξις*, *ὄνομα*, *κατηγόρημα*, or *κατηγορία* (especially if the *significatum* is not an individual, a species, or a genus, but a *γένος γενικώτατον*, that is, one of the highest genera in terms of predicative power). In the case of *οὐσία* this becomes problematic, as we will see. But in Greek the act of predicating, *τὸ κατηγορεῖν*, is also called *κατεγορία*. Hence the "puzzle" which Ross, [276] I, pp. lxxiii-cx, Anton, [378], Gillespie, [460], and others have tried to solve.

of second position (δευτέρα θέσις). Examples of the former are such words as 'dog' and 'gold' which denote physical existents; of the latter such words as 'noun' and 'verb' which are significant to be sure, but refer to certain grammatical types of words. It is this important distinction which enables Porphyry to give his answer to the question of the σκοπὸς of the treatise.

The purpose of this book is to deal with words of the first position, that is, with words denotative of things. For it deals with simple significant articulate sounds inasmuch as they signify things which differ from each other not in number but in genus; for in number both the particular things and the words [that is, their proper names] are indefinite. (p. 58, 5-12)

Regarding Porphyry's interpretation of the purpose of the treatise, there are two points to be made. (1) The treatise deals with words of the "first position" which signify things. (2) The things signified by the categories are simple, i.e. they differ not in number (or in species) but "in genus." By (1) the categorial words are distinguished from other words which are significant by the second position and signify not things but types of words. By (2) the categories are distinguished from all other significant words which signify things that are different either in number (e.g. Socrates, Plato) or in species (e.g. man, horse). For things which are many in number can be one in species or genus so that "the multiplicity of beings and the simple words which designate them has been found to be comprehended in ten genera" (p. 58, 9-12).

The possibility of putting together many particular things characterized by some common property has the advantage of providing a classification of ὄντα under certain very broad kinds designated by certain φωναὶ σημαντικαί. Thus the most general classification is tenfold, according to Aristotle's categorial theory which Porphyry follows here. For the commentator does not deny that there are ten different kinds of beings acknowledged by the Aristotelians, though he cannot accept that the *Categories* was meant to be about them primarily. In closing the discussion of this question, he states:

Since all beings have been included in ten general differences, there are ten general vocal signs which denote them. They are called ten categories, in genus to be sure and in the same manner as beings are said to be ten in genus. Therefore, since the purpose of the book is to deal with significant signs which signify different genera of beings, and since to express things by means of a signifying sign and, in general, to predicate a significant term of certain signified things is called κατηγορεῖν, with good reason he [Aristotle] titled the treatise on the simple significant words which signify genera of beings Κατηγορίαι. (p. 58, 12-20)

From these considerations it becomes clear how Porphyry meant to relate the purpose of the treatise to the title which he considered most

suitable for its content. Evidently, he endeavored to strike a balanced position between those who approached the categories either grammatically or ontologically. According to Porphyry's interpretation, the *Categories* are "primarily" neither about $\delta\upsilon\tau\alpha$ nor about $\delta\nu\acute{o}\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$ of the second position. For he asserts that the purpose of the treatise is to deal with a peculiar sort of $\phi\omega\nu\alpha\acute{\iota}$ which are significant in a special way, since they designate neither individuals nor species but the ten most encompassing genera under which every being or entity must be subsumed. Therefore those who, for grammatical or ontological considerations, had judged the tenfold categorial classification as too short or too long were mistaken in Porphyry's view.

Consequently it would seem that there are three suppositions underlying the categorial theory as Porphyry understands it:

- (a) That the sensible world of human experience consists of a multiplicity of concrete individual $\delta\upsilon\tau\alpha$ which are classifiable into species, genera, and higher genera according to certain ontological resemblances;
- (b) that human beings have the capacity to comprehend this multiplicity *via classificatoria* and to express it by means of significant articulate vocal signs or $\phi\omega\nu\alpha\acute{\iota}$;
- (c) that the "simple" significant words which signify things, when they are said of the signified things, are called categories.

It may be remarked that in his endeavour to find answers to the traditional questions concerning the correct title and the real purpose of the *Categories*, Porphyry gave his own interpretive formula of Aristotle's categorial theory and the meaning of the term $\kappa\alpha\tau\eta\gamma\omicron\rho\iota\alpha$ in particular. To better understand Porphyry's exegesis it will be helpful to compare and contrast it with other competing interpretations. Before I proceed to do so, I should like to emphasize two other important points connected with the questions under consideration.

First, it should be noted that Porphyry's interpretation of the purpose of the Aristotelian treatise became a commonplace for subsequent commentators in the Neoplatonic tradition. This fact may be construed as an indication that Porphyry's views overshadowed all the other interpretations proposed by earlier interpreters. Accepted by the later Neoplatonic commentators, Porphyry's interpretation became the canonical exegesis of the treatise, though sometimes it was apparently misrepresented.¹⁸

Second, Porphyry's interpretation seems well-articulated and clearly expressed even in his extant commentary. There is, therefore, good

¹⁸ Compare, for instance, PhAC, p. 9, and OAC, p. 18, regarding Porphyry's interpretation of the $\sigma\chi\omicron\pi\acute{o}\varsigma$ of the treatise. He is considered respectively, but incorrectly, as representing the logical and the ontological interpretations.

reason to believe that his exegesis was still better expressed in the lost commentary which was presumably more systematic. Nevertheless, there is some evidence which seems to suggest that Porphyry's position with regard to the purpose of the *Categories* did not originate with him. Let us briefly consider the supporting evidence for such a claim.

In the first place, Porphyry himself admits that two of the earlier commentators, namely Boethus and Herminus, understood and interpreted correctly the πρόθεσις of the *Categories*.¹⁹ Then, it is noteworthy that Porphyry never mentions Alexander of Aphrodisias in his extant commentary as holding views similar to his own on this issue, as has been explicitly stated by Simplicius. It is probable that he had done so in his lost commentary. It is also reasonable to suppose that mention of the names of Boethus and Herminus is simply indicative of the fact that earlier commentators had expressed similar views, without implying that these two interpreters were the only ones who hit the target.

The fact, however, is that in other commentaries the name of Porphyry, when mentioned, follows the name of Alexander.²⁰ Both of them were considered as proponents of the canonical exegesis regarding the purpose of the *Categories*. According to Philoponus and Elias, the orthodox view found its complete expression in Iamblichus.²¹ Simplicius quotes Alexander on this issue as follows:

Speech is meaningful because its parts are signifying signs. Since Aristotle wanted to make clear what the concepts which are signified by the first and simple parts of speech are, he divided being not into particulars (for they are undefinable and unknowable due to their variety and change), but into the ten highest genera which he called categories. For as the most general genera they are predicated of many other things, though nothing is predicated of them. Therefore, the purpose of the book is to deal with the simple and most general parts of speech which signify simple things by way of signifying the simple concepts of these simple things. (p. 10, 11-19)

It is evident from this passage that there are certain differences between Alexander and Porphyry, mainly in respect to the technical vocabulary which each commentator uses to express the common thesis that the treatise deals with linguistically "simple" items which signify ontologically "simple" types of beings by way of signifying logically "simple" concepts. Therefore, it would not be unreasonable to consider

¹⁹ In his rush to prove all earlier commentators wrong, Elias created some confusion (EAC, p. 129, 11). He ascribed the logical interpretation to Porphyry and the ontological interpretation to Herminus, despite the fact that Porphyry himself had stated that Herminus and Boethus had identified correctly the purpose of the *Categories* and that he had followed them on this matter (PAC, p. 59, 17-18).

²⁰ E.g. SAC, p. 10, 2 and 13-16.

²¹ EAC, pp. 130-132; PhAC, p. 9, 12.

both Porphyry and Alexander as holders and defenders of what became later on the standard interpretation of the Aristotelian categorial theory.

This inclusive and, so to speak, more sophisticated exegesis was favored by later commentators as the standard one. In fact, it was the outcome of a long series of attempts to synthesize and reconcile the previously existing and competing one-sided interpretations of the treatise.

We may now turn to these alternative and rival exegeses held by different commentators in order to consider the grounds on which they defended their positions. By so doing Porphyry's contribution to the solution of the problems involved in the Aristotelian categorial doctrine will become clearer.

4. *Alternative Proposed Interpretations*

On the basis provided by the extant commentaries, none of which is earlier than Porphyry's, it is evident that their authors agreed on the following points:

- (1) That Aristotle is the author of the treatise;²²
- (2) That it belongs to that part of philosophy which is called logic;
- (3) That it is divided into three parts;
- (4) That it is very useful both for understanding the Aristotelian logic and for grasping other important doctrines of his philosophical system;
- (5) That the most suitable title of the treatise is *Κατηγορίαι*;
- (6) That the purpose of the treatise is to deal with significant vocal signs (*φωναί*) signifying things (*πράγματα*) by means of signifying concepts (*νοήματα*).²³

They also agreed that the most difficult and most important of the questions related to the *Categories* was that of the real purpose of the treatise (*σκοπός*). This question caused prolonged debates which seem to justify Dexippus' opinion:

What was the reason which made the ancient philosophers have so many and diverse debates about that work of Aristotle which we call *Categories*? For I am quite sure that there have been neither more disputations nor

²² The question of whether or not the treatise is a genuine Aristotelian work has been debated rigorously in modern times. The list of scholars who consider it as (a) partially (i.e. the conclusion of Chapter 9 and the *post-praedicamenta*) or (b) wholly spurious is long. As given by I. Husik [498], p. 97, it respectively includes (a) Waitz, Zeller, Maier, Gomperz and Ross, and (b) Spengel, Prantl, Rose, Brandis, Gercke, Dupr  el and Jaeger. For Husik, as for the ancient commentators "the whole work is genuine" (p. 112). On this, see also L. M. Rijk [585], and W. D. Ross [592].

²³ Compare AAC, pp. 12-15, PhAC, pp. 12-13, OAC, pp. 22-25, EAC, pp. 132-134, and SAC, pp. 13-20.

greater controversies on any other issue than this, not only by the Stoics and the Platonists who try to undermine the Aristotelian categories, but also among the Aristotelians themselves The reason was that the purpose of the book was to deal with the first simple words and their *significata*. However, since λόγος is useful for all the branches of philosophy and since the principles of λόγος are the simple words and their *significata*, it is obvious why there have been many controversies on whether or not Aristotle has treated them well.²⁴

It seems to me that Aristotle or, to say the least, the text of the *Categories* in the form in which we have it, was partially responsible for the proliferation of variant interpretive formulas. For instance, the term λεγόμενα is used several times at the beginning of the treatise. The general meaning of this term is: "Those-things-which-are-said." Its etymological connection with the noun λόγος and the verb λέγειν (to say) is obvious. The term also occurs immediately before the list of the ten categories, in a passage which reads: "Of things said without any combination, each signifies either substance or quantity or quality. . . ." ²⁵

Now the question may be raised: What is that-which-is-said? Is it a word, a concept, or a thing?²⁶ It seems that, what can be said directly (or primarily) must be words, and what can be said indirectly (or secondarily) must be either concepts or (more remotely) things. For, in meaningful discourse, human beings use words in order to express thoughts and denote things.

If this is so, and if Aristotle's *Categories* are about τὰ λεγόμενα, then it is not surprising that the earlier commentators were divided into three parties on this issue. Each of these parties had its own orthodox exegesis of the "true" meaning of τὰ λεγόμενα and its own way of supporting the orthodox view by quoting and emphasizing certain carefully selected passages of the treatise, while rejecting any rival exegesis as heretical.

It will be helpful to give a special name to each of these alternative interpretations. So let us call "grammatical" that interpretation according to which τὰ λεγόμενα are words or articulate sounds (λέξεις, φωναί). Let us call "ontological" that interpretation which claims that the τὰ λεγόμενα are things or beings (πράγματα, ὄντα). And let us call "logical"

²⁴ DAC, p. 5, 16-24. I left λόγος untranslated on purpose. In this context the meaning of the word is clearly closer to *oratio* than to *ratio*, but even so to choose among the half a dozen alternatives listed in the LS is not at all easy.

²⁵ *Categories* 1a 16-1b 26. For a discussion of συμπλοκή, which reminds us of the συμπλοκή εἰδῶν in *Sophist* 253C-259D, I refer to Ackrill's notes [2], pp. 73-74, Trevaskis [623], and Moravcsik [552].

²⁶ DAC, p. 6, 30-32. In J. Malcolm's view, ". . . the question as to whether Aristotle is concerned with classifying words, things, or indeed, concepts has proved to be both the inspiration and the despair of his commentators" [540], p. 667.

that interpretation which identifies τὰ λεγόμενα with concepts (νοήματα). It is the case that all commentators who came after Porphyry considered themselves followers of a fourth and more sophisticated exegesis which synthesized in itself all the other three one-sided interpretations. Let us call this interpretation "inclusive." In addition to that, all these later commentators exhibit the following common characteristics:

(1) They speak about disagreement between the earlier commentators on the issue of the purpose of the *Categories*.

(2) They distinguish three parties holding different views on this issue.

(3) They give some of the arguments which support each rival interpretation.

(4) They diverge in identifying the holders and followers of each interpretation.²⁷

Let us now turn and examine the four main interpretations of the *Categories*, as presented by the later commentators.

a. The Grammatical Interpretation

According to this interpretation the purpose of the *Categories* is to deal with words and their types. The holders of this interpretation were able to support it on the following grounds.²⁸ First of all, they argued, the treatise belongs to logic. As a matter of fact, it is the first among those logical treatises which comprise the Aristotelian *Organon*. It precedes the *De Interpretatione*, which deals with propositions, that is, combinations of words. Therefore, the *Categories* must be about simple and uncombined words which can function as parts of propositions.

Secondly, Aristotle, referring to the categories, uses in this treatise expressions such as λεγόμενα, λέγεται, λεγομένων all of which are etymologically connected with the verb λέγειν (to say) as we have seen. Now, for the supporters of the grammatical interpretation it is evident that words considered as articulate sounds can be primarily said. Therefore, they conclude, the *Categories* deals primarily with articulate sounds (λέξεις, φωναί).

Thirdly, in presenting the list of the ten categories, Aristotle uses the word σημαίνειν (to signify).²⁹ Since things as such do not signify but

²⁷ For instance, in disagreement with Simplicius who considered both Alexander and Porphyry as representatives of the inclusive interpretation, Elias attributed to them the grammatical and the logical interpretations respectively. EAC, p. 129, 10-12.

²⁸ In presenting the arguments of each of the alleged parties, I will follow SAC which is more detailed than the other commentaries. However, similar arguments are to be found in all the references given in note No. 23, above.

²⁹ The emphasis here is on the σημαίνειν. When Porphyry, and the later commentators who followed him, states that the treatise of the *Categories* is about φωναὶ σημαντικαί, he adds the important qualification, καθὸ σημαντικαί. This qualification takes the treatise away from the field of grammar to the field of logic and, by extension, to that of ontology.

rather are signified by vocal or written signs, the holders of this position drew the conclusion that the *Categories* is not about beings or things as such, but about the words which signify them.

Fourthly, having enumerated the categories Aristotle added an important comment utilized by the commentators of this school: "None of the above is said by itself in any affirmation, but by the combination of these with one another an affirmation is produced" (2a 4-6). There is no doubt, for the supporters of the grammatical interpretation, that this passage provides a good ground in support of their views. For combination which produces affirmation can be conceived only between signifying signs (*voces*) but not between signified things (*res*).³⁰

To all these arguments the opponents replied by pointing out that it is the business of the grammarian, not the philosopher, to deal with words and their types. The task of the philosopher is to go beyond the signifying signs in order to consider that which is signified, τὰ ὄντα. It goes without saying that the philosophers who were prepared to argue along those lines were prepared to interpret the treatise ontologically.

b. The Ontological Interpretation

Those who understood and interpreted the *Categories* ontologically were able to support their position on two grounds.

First they paid attention to those passages of the treatise where Aristotle used such ontologically charged terms as ὄντα, οὐσία, ἐστὶ, all of which are etymologically related to the verb εἶναι (to be). They quoted from the *Categories* (1a 20-21) that famous passage which reads in Greek as follows: "Τῶν ὄντων τὰ μὲν καθ' ὑποκειμένου τινὸς λέγεται, ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ δὲ οὐδενί ἐστιν, οἷον ἄνθρωπος." From this they inferred that the treatise deals with ὄντα, so that the ontological interpretation of it was the only correct interpretation.

Second, they identified τὰ λεγόμενα with τὰ ὄντα. In other words, for them, it is things that can be said primarily and mainly. For, unless there are real things or beings to refer to, our speech is meaningless. It is precisely the reference to those realities which determines the truth or falsehood of a proposition, according to this interpretation. Therefore, "the things said" must be understood as the signified things rather than the signifying signs.

³⁰ In *Metaphysics* 1027b 25-30, Aristotle claims that "Falsity and truth are not in things but in thought. . . . The combination and the separation are in thought and not in the things and that which is in this sense is a different sort of 'being' from the things that are in the full sense" (Ross' translation).

To its opponents this view seemed to neglect an important factor. It does not take into account the fact that the treatise on categories does not belong to ontology but to logic. It is the former which deals with being(s) *qua* being(s), as Aristotle has shown in his *Metaphysics*. Their conclusion was that either the *Categories* does not belong to logic or else its purpose cannot be that of treating beings as such. Since, however, both the grammatical and the ontological interpretations seemed to these critics to be extremes, they were determined to find a third position mediating between the two.

c. The Logical Interpretation

The defenders of the logical interpretation had three arguments to support their view. First, according to Olympiodorus, evidently following an Aristotelian pattern according to which some entities occupy the position of the subject, others the position of the predicate and still others both positions, they were able to argue in the following way:

Of things that are some only announce others, some are only announced by others, and some others both announce and are announced. For instance, vocal signs only announce, existing things are only announced, but the concepts both announce and are announced. For they are announced by vocal signs and themselves announce the existing things. Therefore the concepts are placed between words and things. Others say that Aristotle deals with words and things. But between them there are the concepts. Therefore, the purpose of the *Categories* is to deal with concepts. (OAC, p. 19, 17-19)

Secondly, to paraphrase Dexippus (DAC, p. 9, 20-29), "for the ancient" commentators (again without specification as to who these ἀρχαῖοι were) concepts were considered as the only genuine *significata*. For it is τὰ νοήματα which are signified "primarily," while τὰ πράγματα are signified "secondarily." Having drawn the distinction between things signified in the first place and things signified in the second place, they were able to claim that things cannot be signified except through the function of the mediating concepts. Besides, true and false propositions would be impossible without the concepts mediating between the vocal signs and the physical objects.

Thirdly, after discussing separately what are known as the ten categories, Aristotle closes the discussion by saying that "About the proposed genera, then, enough has been said" (11b 15). Now the question is: What does he mean by genera here? It is well known that for the Neoplatonists there were three kinds of genera. As identified by OAC (p. 19, 30-35), they are: (a) Those which precede the many (τὰ πρὸ τῶν πολλῶν) and constitute the subject of Theology or First Philosophy. (b)

Those which are to be found in the many (ἐν τοῖς πολλοῖς) and constitute the subject of Physiology or Physics. (c) Those which follow after the many (ἐπὶ τοῖς πολλοῖς) and constitute the subject of Psychology and Logic. Consequently, since the *Categories* is a part of Logic, it must deal with the third kind of genera, that is, the concepts. Any alternative solution must remove the treatise on the categories from the *Organon*, according to this interpretation.

However, the critics of this view were quick to point out that to deal with concepts *qua* mental entities was the task of the psychologist rather than the logician. It was evident, therefore, to these critics that none of the three proposed alternative interpretive formulas of the purpose of the treatise could be accepted as satisfactory. For this reason, the later commentators were prepared to move towards a new solution which must be considered next.

d. The Inclusive Interpretation

As we have seen, a tendency towards a more comprehensive solution to the problem of the correct interpretation of the categorial doctrine was discernible even in Porphyry's predecessors, like Alexander of Aphrodisias and Boethus of Sidon. Porphyry's commentaries seem to have added momentum to this tendency so that the commentators after Porphyry took pains to make sure that they would be understood as holders of the true exegesis of the treatise. Thus, a student of Porphyry, namely Iamblichus, is reported by EAC (p. 130, 16-18) to have declared with reference to the endless debates of the interpreters of the doctrine:

O men! You fight each other without really fighting each other. Though you tell the truth, none of you is wholly right. And none of you is entirely wrong, though you tell lies.

In fact what this group called the true exegesis was but an attempt to synthesize all the genuine elements to be found in each of the competing and one-sided interpretations proposed by earlier interpreters. The fact that all the three parties had quoted Aristotle in order to support their favorite position was viewed by later commentators as an indication that each of them was partially correct. Thus, for them the orthodox position on this issue came to be the position of Iamblichus who, following Porphyry very closely, had stated explicitly that:

It is Aristotle's purpose here to deal neither with vocal signs only nor with concepts only, nor with existing things only, but with all the three together. (OAC p. 20, 9-12)

In another formulation we read:

The purpose of the *Categories* is to deal with the first position of the simple φωναί which signify simple πράγματα by signifying simple νοήματα. (EAC, p. 131, 23-24)

In this way, then, the central problem of the purpose of the treatise and the correct interpretation of its content found its final and satisfactory solution for the Aristotelian commentators of later antiquity.³¹

6. Conclusion

From our discussion so far it is clear that the treatise of the *Categories* was regarded by the commentators of later antiquity as very important but problematic in many respects. The fact that so many outstanding philosophers of that period felt the need to comment on the treatise or at least to discuss, favorably or not, the Aristotelian categorial doctrine clearly indicates the magnitude of the impact of the *Categories*, after the Andronicean edition had made it available to the students of philosophy. During the period from the first century B.C. to the third century A.D. the exegetical problems related to the *Categories* were crystallized in an established tradition which had to be followed by any serious commentator.

In all probability Porphyry followed the tradition in giving his answers to the six questions in his systematic commentary. However, in his extant commentary Porphyry selects of the six traditional questions only the two which relate to the title and the purpose of the treatise. As I tried to show, the way in which these two questions are answered by a commentator is indicative of the interpretation of the categorial doctrine which he had adopted. Both questions were vigorously debated and many proposals were made in search for satisfactory answers.

The Porphyrian position with regard to these questions was: (1) that the correct title of the treatise is Κατηγορίαι; and (2) that the real purpose

³¹ The same history was repeated in modern times. It began in the nineteenth century with the debate between Trendelenburg [324], Bonitz [43], and later on Maier [193] and Apelt [380] who respectively emphasized the grammatical, the ontological, and the logical aspects of Aristotle's categorial theory. The authors of recent books and essays on this subject invariably have taken pains, like the later Neoplatonic commentators, to make clear that they will be understood as favoring an inclusive interpretation of one sort or another. Consider, for example, Edel [100], pp. 97-101 and [434], Guthrie [130], pp. 138-141, Owens [237], pp. 14-23, Rijk [265], pp. 76-92, Ross [276], pp. 83-90, and [277], pp. 20-25, Anton [376] and [378], Gillespie [460], Graeser [464], Kahn [508], Kosman [514], Malcolm [540], and Moravcsik [552]. For the most complete list of proposed interpretations of the Aristotelian doctrine of categories, see Brentano [48], pp. 49-130.

of the treatise is to deal with simple significant words (ἀπλᾶ σημαντικαὶ φωναί). To defend his position, Porphyry provided the following reasons: (a) that neither the title *Pre-Topics* nor the title *On the Genera of Being* is justified by the content of the treatise; and (b) that none of the other interpretations, i.e. the grammatical, the ontological and the logical is defensible.

Porphyry's tendency was towards an inclusive interpretive formula capable of combining in a unifying way all three interpretations. This Porphyrian exegesis, though not entirely original, became the standard view on this subject and it was accepted as such by later commentators. It is still the favored interpretation among serious Aristotelian scholars.

CHAPTER TWO

PORPHYRY'S COMMENTS ON *CATEGORIES*, I

It has been mentioned that one of the traditional questions related to the *Categories* was the question of division of the treatise into the appropriate parts. It seems that Porphyry had accepted and followed, in his extant but incomplete *Commentary*, the traditional tripartite division of it. Since Porphyry's work ends abruptly, i.e. without covering the third part of the treatise, my discussion of that part will be brief by necessity. It will be incorporated into the next chapter which is devoted to Porphyry's comments on the second and most important part of the treatise.

In the present chapter, I intend to examine in a critical way four main problems pertaining to the first and introductory part of the treatise. Porphyry discussed these problems which may be identified as follows:

- (1) Ambiguity and its kinds (homonymy, synonymy, paronymy);
- (2) Division of beings (twofold, fourfold, tenfold);
- (3) Division of expressions (with and without combination);
- (4) Subordination (genera, species, *differentiae*).

I will proceed to discuss these problems after I have dealt briefly with the division of the treatise into parts and the authenticity of each part.

1. The Division of the Treatise into Parts

To the ancient Greek commentators the division of *Categories* into parts did not appear to be problematic. For them it was evident that the treatise falls into three parts. Besides the main part on the categories or *praedicamenta*, there are two other parts of which the one precedes and the other follows the main part. Later Greek commentators referred to them respectively as τὰ πρὸ τῶν κατηγοριῶν and τὰ μετὰ τὰς κατηγορίας.¹

With the exception of Andronicus of Rhodes, who had expressed some doubts about the last part, there was general agreement among the ancient commentators on the tripartition of the treatise and the authenticity of each part (SAC, pp. 18, 7-21 and 266, 6). Porphyry seems to have considered all three parts as authentically Aristotelian, despite the fact that his extant *Commentary* stops abruptly at the point where the three last categories are discussed collectively (p. 142). That is to say, the com-

¹ These two parts of the treatise are better known by their Latin names, *pre-
praedicamenta* and *post-praedicamenta* respectively in relation to *praedicamenta*.

mentary does not cover the third part of the treatise, the *post-praedicamenta*. However, it is evident from elsewhere, that Porphyry considered even the third part of the book to be both genuine and useful for the understanding of Aristotle's categorial doctrine.²

For lack of sufficient evidence it is not easy to tell whether Porphyry was the first to accept and defend the authenticity of the treatise as a whole. Very likely he was not the first to do so. For, if we assume that there were other commentators, besides Andronicus, who had raised any doubts about the authenticity of the treatise as a whole or any of its parts, in all probability that would not have escaped the attention of all the later commentators, especially Simplicius who addressed the question explicitly. The point is that no commentator after Porphyry seems to have questioned the authenticity of the *Categories* as a whole or in part.³

Having accepted the treatise as authentic and its tripartite division, Porphyry and the other commentators had to face the question: Why did Aristotle not begin directly with the *praedicamenta*? In other words, why did he think it necessary to open his treatise on the categories with the esoteric remarks on such topics as ὁμώνυμα, συνώνυμα, παρώνυμα, ὄντα, λεγόμενα, and so forth?⁴ No commentator worthy of the name could bypass these questions. Porphyry is no exception in this regard:

Aristotle discussed these subjects neither because he has forgotten his purpose nor because he wants to appear odd. He just gives in advance what is necessary to the teaching of the categories, so that he may not interrupt the continuity of his exposition to make the necessary clarifications. Like the geometricians, who define their terms and give the axioms, the postulates, and the divisions in advance, Aristotle teaches first about the things that are called homonymous, synonymous, paronymous, and whatever else is most useful for the teaching of the categories. After the exposition of the doctrine of the categories, Aristotle teaches about a few more things, the usefulness of which we will consider in due course in the right place. (p. 60, 1-10)

The "few things" which Porphyry intended to discuss "in due course" and which follow the exposition of the categories are precisely

² PAC, p. 60, 4-10.

³ For references to the modern debate on the question of authenticity of the treatise, see Chapter I, note No. 22.

⁴ The English rendering of ὁμώνυμα as "homonymous things" is preferable to "homonyms" in this context. Aristotle is concerned here not with mere words but with real things (where the word 'things' is used, "as a blanket-term for items in any category," Ackrill, [2], p. 71). Professor Apostle [15], pp. 1 and 51, renders the expression ὁμώνυμα λέγεται alternatively as "things are named equivocally" (which is also Cooke's translation), "things are said to be equivocal" or, more literally, "those are named equivocally." But he explains that "... the word ὁμώνυμα as used here appears to be an attribute of things rather than of the corresponding names," strange as it may sound linguistically in English.

those which constitute the *post-praedicamenta*. From remarks such as the above, it is evident that (1) Porphyry considered the *pre-praedicamenta* as “necessary” to the grasping of the categorial doctrine; and that (2) he considered the *post-praedicamenta* as “very useful” for the completion and clarification of the same doctrine.⁵ In Porphyry’s view, that which is necessary precedes the doctrine, while that which is useful follows the exposition of the doctrine.⁶ In light of this evidence, it is clear that Porphyry accepted all three parts of the treatise as genuine Aristotelian work. So did the other commentators who followed him.

2. Ambiguity and Its Kinds

It seems that at Aristotle’s time there was a growing interest among philosophers in the difficulties involved in the use of linguistic devices to express critical thinking unambiguously. The teaching and the skeptical tendencies of the Sophists had added urgency to this problem.⁷ Aristotle was one of the few who saw clearly that ambiguous language may lead to many fallacies.⁸ For him, it is exactly the ambiguity of many words which makes sophistic tricks possible.⁹ His awareness of this problem and his determination to be precise led Aristotle to treat what he calls *πολλαχῶς λεγόμενα* with caution. Thus, it is no accident that in some of the main treatises Aristotle takes pains to distinguish the variant meanings of terms charged with philosophical import such as *τὸ ὄν* (being), *τὸ ἓν* (one), *τὸ ἀγαθόν* (good), *οὐσία* (substance), etc.¹⁰ Since the term *κατηγορία* is used homonymously to designate all ten categories, and since homonymy is the main source of fallacy, it is understandable, in Porphyry’s view, why Aristotle opens the treatise on categories with the

⁵ The justification of the separation of the *post-praedicamenta* from the *pre-praedicamenta*, for the ancient commentators, was that the former are “somehow familiar,” while the latter are “completely unfamiliar” to the reader of the treatise (AAC, p. 14, 12-13).

⁶ Significantly, the distinction between *ἀναγκαῖον* (that which is necessary for something) and *χρήσιμον* (that which is useful for something) occurs again in the opening paragraph of the *Isagoge*. In his commentary on that treatise, Ammonius has much to say about this distinction (pp. 30-34).

⁷ Speusippus, Plato’s successor and Aristotle’s rival, is reported by Simplicius as having an elaborate doctrine of ambiguous terms which included, besides the three cases mentioned by Aristotle, *ταυτώνυμα*, *ἐτερόνυμα*, and *πολύωνυμα* (SAC, pp. 38, 19-39, 16).

⁸ In *On Sophistical Refutations* 165b 26-28, homonymy is mentioned first among the six types of fallacies which depend on diction (λέξις).

⁹ In *Rhetoric* 1404b 37-39, Aristotle states: “τῶν δ’ ὀνομάτων τῷ μὲν σοφιστῇ ὁμωνυμίαι χρήσιμοι (παρὰ ταύτας γὰρ κακουργεῖ), τῷ ποιητῇ δὲ συνωνυμίαι”.

¹⁰ Consider, for instance, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1096a 24, “τὰγαθὸν ἰσαχῶς λέγεται τῷ ὄντι” and compare it to *Metaphysics* 1017a 23-24, “ὅσαχῶς γὰρ λέγεται τοσαυταχῶς τὸ εἶναι σημαίνει” (with reference to τὰ σχήματα τῆς κατηγορίας). Book Delta as a whole, is the *locus classicus* of Aristotle’s treatment of the *πολλαχῶς λεγόμενα*.

discussion of *ὁμώνυμα* which he intended to use in stating his categorial doctrine. Here I must quote the entire opening paragraph of the *Categories* because it is important in itself and because I intend to discuss it in some detail following the Greek commentators, especially Porphyry.

When things have only a name in common and the definition of being which corresponds to the name is different, they are called *homonymous*. Thus, for example, both man and a picture are animals. These have only a name in common and the definition of being which corresponds to the name is different; for if one is to say what being an animal is for each of them, one will give two distinct definitions.

When things have the name in common and the definition of being which corresponds to the name is the same, they are called *synonymous*. Thus, for example, both a man and an ox are animals. Each of these is called by a common name, 'animal', and the definition of being is also the same; for if one is to give the definition of each—what being an animal is for each of them—one will give the same definition.

When things get their name from something, with a difference of ending, they are called *paronymous*. Thus, for example, the grammarian gets his name from grammar, the brave get theirs from bravery. (1a 1-15)

It is evident from this quotation that, for Aristotle, there is a name which names and a definition which defines each kind of "the things that are" (τὰ ὄντα).¹¹ For instance, any representative of the human species can be called 'a man,' which is defined, to use a commonplace, as "animal rational, and mortal." Now, if one is willing to consider the possible ways in which names, definitions, and things, are related, then the following scheme suggests itself:

- (a) things which have in common only the name;
- (b) things which have in common both name and definition;
- (c) things which have in common neither name nor definition;
- (d) things which have in common only the definition;
- (e) things which have in common name and definition partially.

To use labels:

- (a) homonyms or (better) homonymous [things];
- (b) synonyms or (better) synonymous [things];
- (c) heteronyms or (better) heteronymous [things];¹²
- (d) polyonyms or (better) polyonymous [things];
- (e) paronyms or (better) paronymous [things].

¹¹ Here I follow PAC, pp. 60-61. The designation of each thing or kind of thing can be made, according to Porphyry, either by a name (proper or common) or by definition (proper, i.e. *per genus et differentiam*, or descriptive, i.e. *ὑπογραφικὸς λόγος* or, simply, *ὑπογραφή*).

¹² AAC, p. 16, 24-30, distinguishes between *ἕτερα* and *ἑτερόνυμα* on the basis that the former cover cases of things which have neither the name nor the definition in common, while the latter have at least something in common, though they, too, differ in both name and definition. For instance, *ἀνάβασις* and *κατάβασις* with reference to the same *κλίμαξ* (stairway).

Given this scheme, the following question may be raised: Why did Aristotle deal only with cases (a), (b) and (e)? Or, which amounts to the same, why did he omit cases (c) and (d)? Two answers can be given (and, as a matter of fact, were given) to this question. First, it can be said that the author of the treatise omits those cases which he is not going to use in developing his categorial doctrine.¹³ Secondly, it can be observed that, in a sense, the omitted cases (c) and (d) are the opposite of (b) and (a) respectively. Now, given that, for Aristotle, there is only one and the same science of the opposites (e.g. medicine is the science of health as well as disease), it may be argued that it is not necessary to deal with both opposites.¹⁴

There was another related question of minor importance which should be mentioned here. Why is it that Aristotle deals with homonymous [things] instead of homonymy in abstract? We recall that Porphyry's assumption was that in the *Categories* Aristotle deals primarily with signifying words and only secondarily with signified things. So it would be reasonable if the treatise opened with a discussion of ὁμωνυμία instead of ὁμώνυμα. Porphyry's subtle answer to this perplexing question, to paraphrase it, is as follows: The phenomenon of homonymy is not due to the character of words, but rather to the realities for which the words stand (p. 61, 17-21). For example, the word 'dog' is neutral in itself in terms of homonymy, until upon investigation it is ascertained that its meaning covers beings which belong to different species (in Greek the word κύων names not only the domestic animal, but also a star and a kind of fish). Consequently it is not possible, according to Porphyry, to speak about homonymy before the designated things are examined and found sharing in the same name, though their definitions are different.¹⁵ So, Aristotle was not mistaken when he considered the homonymous, the synonymous, and the paronymous things in that order at the beginning of his treatise. In what follows I will examine each case of ambiguity as Aristotle presents it and Porphyry comments on it.

a. Homonymy

The stipulative definition of ὁμώνυμα with which the treatise on the categories opens reads as follows in Greek: "Ὁμώνυμα λέγεται ὧν ὄνομα

¹³ As Porphyry put it (p. 61, 2-3): "ὅτι τούτων οὐκ ἔχρηζεν εἰς τὰ ἐξῆς, ὧν δὲ ἐχρηζέ, τούτων ἐμνημόνευσεν."

¹⁴ This argument is obviously tenuous. It is better to follow SAC, p. 38, 11-18, which asserts that the cases (c) and (d) belong to the field of Rhetoric rather than to Philosophy proper.

¹⁵ The point is that sharing in the same name is a necessary but not sufficient condition for two things to be called homonymous. For they may very well be synonymous if, upon investigation, it is found that the same definition is applicable to both of them, that is, that they belong to the same genus categorially.

μόνον κοινόν, ὃ δὲ κατὰ τοῦνομα λόγος τῆς οὐσίας ἕτερος.' Two parts may be distinguished in this definition: (1) that which refers to what homonymous things have in common, that is, their common name; and (2) that which specifies how they differ from each other, that is, the definition or λόγος τῆς οὐσίας which, though it corresponds to their common name, is not the same for both of them.

It is the case that this definition was hotly debated by the commentators, as has been noticed by other scholars.¹⁶ Some of them held that the second part of the definition is redundant and unnecessary, because it is easily understood and implied by the first. For if homonymous things have in common *only* the name, then, by implication, their definitions cannot be the same.¹⁷ Others questioned the expression λόγος τῆς οὐσίας.¹⁸ Why not just λόγος or ὀρισμός instead? The most debatable, however, was the expression κατὰ τοῦνομα.¹⁹ Let us examine what Porphyry had to say about these questions and disputations.

First of all, Porphyry remarks that ὄνομα (name) should be understood as applying not only to substantive nouns but to any significant word which, taken together with the definite article in Greek, can play the role of a substantive (p. 62, 1-6). In addition, Porphyry observes that the meaning of the word μόνον (only) must be clarified. In Greek this word can mean either that something is unique or that something is distinguished from something else in one specified way. It is the second sense that has to be understood here, according to Porphyry (p. 62, 12).

Finally, there is the term κοινόν (common) to be considered here as a case of πολλαχῶς λεγόμενον because it has at least four distinguishable usages. It can mean (1) that which is in common and divisible into parts (e.g. food); (2) that which is indivisible but its use can be in common (e.g. a horse);²⁰ (3) that which is in common but may become yours or his temporarily (e.g. a seat in the theater); and (4) that which, as a whole, can be enjoyed by many at the same time (e.g. the voice of a singer in the theater). As Porphyry explains, it is the fourth usage of the term that is intended in the Aristotelian doctrine of ὁμώνυμα (p. 62, 30).

Now, I come to the second part of the definition.²¹ In the complete

¹⁶ For a detailed analysis of the various views of the ancient scholiasts on ὁμώνυμα, see J. P. Anton [375], [376], and [377].

¹⁷ OAC, p. 31, 6-10; EAC, p. 138, 20-23.

¹⁸ SAC, p. 29, 30-31.

¹⁹ AAC, pp. 17-21; OAC, pp. 26-33; PhAC, pp. 14-22; EAC, pp. 135-141; SAC, pp. 21-33; and DAC, pp. 18-22.

²⁰ A horse, of course, can be divided into parts, but in that case it would cease to be a horse because it would not be able to perform the function of being-a-horse anymore.

²¹ Modern scholars such as Ackrill, Anton, Apostle, Cooke, and others, refer to Aristotle's statement about ὁμώνυμα as a definition, while the ancient commentators, especially Porphyry, Dexippus, and Simplicius, preferred to call it a ὑπογραφή (descrip-

form in which we have it today, this part seems to be the result of many amendations made by the later commentators and considered as necessary for avoiding misinterpretations. In addition to the one given above, four more different writings of this part have been preserved, viz.:

- (a) “. . . ὁ δὲ λόγος ἕτερος;”²²
- (b) “. . . ὁ δὲ λόγος τῆς οὐσίας ἕτερος;”²³
- (c) “. . . ὁ δὲ κατὰ τοῦνομα λόγος ἕτερος;”²⁴
- (d) “. . . ὁ δὲ κατὰ τοῦνομα ὀρισμὸς ἕτερος.”²⁵

Porphyry is against all these versions and an ardent defender of the complete version of the passage, as given above (pp. 64-66). He thinks that omission of either of the two crucial expressions, that is, (1) τῆς οὐσίας or (2) κατὰ τοῦνομα, will be the cause of ambiguity and confusion. Therefore, he attempts to find grounds to support the complete and, in his view, correct writing of the passage.

In defending the necessity of adding the expression (1), he argues as follows, even against the admired Boethus:²⁶

Since Herminus and most of the commentators have found in the description of the ὁμώνυμα the expression τῆς οὐσίας, I consider its addition necessary; for λόγος can also mean induction, syllogism, affirmation, negation But how would it be possible to distinguish the meanings of definition and description from the others without the addition of the expression τῆς οὐσίας?²⁷

From this passage it is evident that Porphyry aims at narrowing the meaning of the highly ambiguous λόγος by adding the expression τῆς οὐσίας. In this new form, the meaning of the expression λόγος τῆς οὐσίας

tion or delineation) instead. By doing so, they left the way open for a broad interpretation of the doctrine in order to include ‘being’ among the terms which are only ὁμώνυμῶς predicated.

²² Simplicius reports that this was Speusippus’ version. In this light, Professor Anton is correct in stating that “The proper context for understanding the opening chapters of the *Categories* is their anti-Speusippian logic and ontology” [376], p. 260.

²³ OAC, p. 32, 2; and PhAC, p. 19, 9-10. Simplicius mentions two notorious critics of the *Categories*, Atticus and Nicostratus, who tried to prove that, in Aristotle’s terms, ὁμώνυμα are συνώνυμα by the following hypothetical syllogism:

- (1) If συνώνυμα have in common both the name and the definition; and
- (2) if ὁμώνυμα have in common the name and the definition of ὁμώνυμα;
- (3) then ὁμώνυμα must be συνώνυμα by Aristotle’s definition of συνώνυμα.

The door is open for fallacies of this sort to creep in, unless the expression κατὰ τοῦνομα, which specifies which definition is meant here, is added.

²⁴ It is reported that Boethus subscribed to this version, SAC, p. 30, 1-2; and OAC, p. 32, 1-4.

²⁵ PhAC, p. 19-22.

²⁶ Porphyry (p. 59, 15-19) mentions Boethus and Herminus as the two earlier commentators who held the correct interpretation of Aristotle’s doctrine of categories.

²⁷ SAC, p. 30, 6-10. Since this passage is not taken from the extant *Commentary*, I assume that Simplicius quotes here from Porphyry’s lost *Commentary*.

depends on the sense in which οὐσία is understood and this is not at all clear.

What Porphyry wants to make clear is that λόγος must be understood in the sense of definition here. This is evident from the following passage:

Λόγος is a word with many meanings. . . one of which is definition, i.e. λόγος τῆς οὐσίας; for the addition of the phrase τῆς οὐσίας distinguishes definition from the other meanings of λόγος. (p. 64, 23-65, 8)

It is worth noting here that Porphyry's interpretation of the crucial expression λόγος τῆς οὐσίας as meaning definition has been accepted by modern scholars as the standard exegesis.²⁸

With regard to the other debatable expression (2), i.e. κατὰ τοῦνομα, and whether it is indispensable for the understanding of the nature of ὁμώνυμα as defined by Aristotle, Porphyry makes the following statement:

As we have already stated, each kind of thing is signified either by a name or by a definition. Now, the definition must both correspond to the name and express the [nature of the] thing as the bearer of that name. (p. 63, 6-8)

Porphyry illustrates what he means here by way of example. Take, for instance, the word ἄνθρωπος (man). This is apparently an ὄνομα (name) which names each and all representatives of the human species which is a determinate and definable kind of being, i.e. an οὐσία. It can be defined, let us say, either as "animal, rational, mortal" or as "sensitive, living substance." Both these definitions are applicable and, at first glance, unobjectionable. However, only the former corresponds to the name 'man' correctly or equivalently (ἰσοζύγως), that is, in such a way that it does not make any difference in meaning to say that "x is a man" or that "x is a mortal, rational animal." For in cases like this, name and definition have an equal referential force, that is, ἰσοδυναμεῖ, as Porphyry put it (p. 64, 2).

Consequently, the addition of the expression κατὰ τοῦνομα to the definition of ὁμώνυμα is needed in order to make clear that the definition which corresponds to the common name of the homonymous things is not the same for both of them. If this expression is omitted, then confusion may occur in comparing the definitions which correspond not to the common name but to some other names by which each of the two things may be named.²⁹ For example, if one wants to compare a man and the statue

²⁸ Referring to the meaning of λόγος τῆς οὐσίας, which he construes as definition, Anton writes: "There is hardly any scholar today who is willing to propose alternative meanings" [376], p. 253.

²⁹ See note No. 23 above.

of a man as bearers of the common name 'animal', upon examination one finds that the definitions corresponding to this common name, are different for each of them. For the definition which states the-what-it-is for a statue to be called an 'animal' is apparently different from that which states the-what-it-is for a man to be called an 'animal,' as Aristotle maintained (1a 3-5).

It may be objected here that the definitions which correspond to 'man' and 'statue' also differ from each other, without constituting a case of ὁμώνυμα. That is correct, and that is why Porphyry insists on the addition of the expression κατὰ τοῦνομα, so that any confusion of this sort may be removed.³⁰ In conclusion, it may be said that Porphyry has a good point here, though he does not always illustrate it with the appropriate examples.³¹

However, one should be careful to note that Porphyry does not intend to illustrate the Aristotelian passage strictly in that part of his *Commentary* where he presents the various tropes of homonymy in general. Thus, things which are homonymous (a) by chance (ἀπὸ τύχης) are distinguished from those which are homonymous (b) by thought (ἀπὸ διανοίας). The latter are subdivided into those which are homonymous (b1) according to similarity (καθ' ὁμοιότητα); (b2) according to analogy (κατ' ἀναλογίαν);³² (b3) by reference to one thing ἀφ' ενός; (b4) by aiming at one thing πρὸς ἓν.³³ Porphyry states (p. 66, 23) that Aristotle made use only of trope (b1) in his explicit formulation of the doctrine of ὁμώνυμα.

From our discussion thus far, two points are quite clear with regard to Porphyry's views on the passage under consideration: (1) He accepted and argued for the writing of the passage which contains both disputable expressions, that is, τῆς οὐσίας and κατὰ τοῦνομα; (2) He interpreted the

³⁰ Anton, *op. cit.*, p. 255: "The special demands of the topic are such that unless a technically restricted formulation of ὁμώνυμα is given at the very beginning unnecessary confusion . . . might result."

³¹ Consider the mention of the two Ajaxes as a case of homonymy. However, the fact should not be overlooked that this example was not meant to illustrate Aristotle's definition of ὁμώνυμα, which are homonymous by similarity (i.e. a case of homonymy ἀπὸ διανοίας), but as a case of homonymy by chance (ἀπὸ τύχης).

³² Porphyry (p. 66, 34-67, 2) accused Atticus of confusion regarding ἀναλογία and μεταφορά both of which he considered as one trope of homonymy. According to Porphyry, the latter does not give rise to ambiguity by homonymy.

³³ Cases (b3) and (b4), according to Porphyry, are not cases of homonymy strictly speaking. They should be considered as occupying an intermediate position between the homonymous and the synonymous things. Porphyry uses here the same examples which Aristotle used in the beginning of *Metaphysics* Γ, to illustrate the meaning of these cases of ambiguity. Modern scholars, such as G. E. L. Owen [569], Ferejohn [441], and Hamlyn [475], have circulated the formula "focal meaning" to refer to ambiguous terms of this kind.

former as having the meaning of definition and, thus, anticipated what has been accepted in modern times as the standard exegesis.³⁴

However, there is another aspect of Porphyry's position on homonymy (in general; not as specified by Aristotle in the opening paragraph of the *Categories*), which should not be overlooked. When he does not confine himself to the text of the treatise on which he comments, Porphyry tends to give to the expression λόγος τῆς οὐσίας the broad meaning which it has in accord with the ambiguous οὐσία. For this important and technical Aristotelian term has three distinguishable meanings in the *Categories*. According to Porphyry's classification it stands for (a) primary substance, i.e. concrete individuals; (b) secondary substance, i.e. species and genera in the category of substance; and (c) the highest genus in the category of substance. Of these three cases only in (b) is the expression λόγος τῆς οὐσίας equivalent to "definite account" or definition. In the other two cases this expression, when used and if used at all, must be interpreted as equivalent to "descriptive account" or delineation (ὕπογραφή).³⁵ For in these extreme cases, i.e. (a) and (c), definition by genus and differentia, in the Aristotelian sense, is simply not possible.

In this way Porphyry was able to give an interpretation which seems to cover the opening section of the *Categories* well, though sometimes he seems to take liberties with regard to a particular term or expression which the text does not allow. He interprets λόγος, for example, as having the meaning of both definition and delineation or description so that he can cover all cases of ὁμώνυμα.

From this viewpoint Porphyry's exegesis of this passage can be considered as a mean between two extremes. Unlike other commentators, Porphyry did not extend the function of ὕπογραφή beyond οὐσία in order to cover even cases of συμβεβηκότα.³⁶ Nor did he identify λόγος strictly with definition, and οὐσία with secondary definable substance, as modern scholars have done.³⁷ Although Porphyry accepted these restrictions with regard to that crucial passage which has been discussed above, in other contexts he tended to give to λόγος and οὐσία their wide multiplicity of meanings.

It is not reasonable to disagree with the strict modern interpretation, as represented by Professor Anton, which claims that later Christian commentators misunderstood and misinterpreted the opening passage of

³⁴ The complete version of the text as defended by Porphyry has also been accepted by modern scholars as the correct writing.

³⁵ In this technical sense ὕπογραφή was used frequently by Porphyry and other commentators after him. The term was not unknown to Aristotle, e.g. *De Interpretatione* 22a 23, *On Plants* 819b 16.

³⁶ PhAC, p. 20, 45-48.

³⁷ Anton, [376], p. 255.

the *Categories*. From an Aristotelian point of view, their very broad exegesis, with all the exaggerations to which it leads, is clearly indefensible. Yet, the modern tendency to put the entire series of commentators from Porphyry to Photius on one level is clearly unjustifiable. It is my thesis that one has to distinguish between commentaries, like Porphyry's, which are careful, moderate and firmly based on Aristotelian grounds and many others which are not.

Furthermore, in comparing and contrasting the modern strict interpretation which sticks to the letter of the treatise, and the Porphyrian exegesis, which attempts to capture and render its spirit as well, one finds it difficult to accept the former for the following reasons:

(1) The modern interpretation is covered by Porphyry's exegesis, but not vice-versa.

(2) The modern interpretation seems to over-platonize Aristotle by identifying the Aristotelian οὐσία with secondary substance exclusively, a position which runs manifestly contrary to Aristotle's ontological and categorial doctrines with their emphasis on the primary substance (τὸδε τι).³⁸

(3) The modern interpretation does not provide an account of the cases of homonymy involved in predicating being of entities and items in every category.³⁹

(4) The claim that Aristotle was aware of the variety of homonymous cases but deliberately chose to refer only to one case as is evident in the example he gave, may sound reasonable but actually ignores the question. For it does not explain why Aristotle, if he really intended what modern interpreters claim, did not use the unambiguous ὁρισμός or λόγος ὁριστικός instead of λόγος τῆς οὐσίας, in view of the fact that he had made use of them elsewhere.⁴⁰ Now, if it is accepted that Aristotle intended that, but failed to make his intention clear, then Porphyry could hardly be blamed for interpreting him in the way he did.

After the above objections have been made, I must state that the modern strict interpretation has the merit at least of being based on the

³⁸ As we will see in Chapter Three, even Porphyry, who was a sympathetic commentator, felt uneasy about Aristotle's strong emphasis on the particular, τὸδε τι.

³⁹ In a sense, the ten categories, which share in the common name κατηγορία and in the common characteristic of being the highest genera in terms of predicative power, constitute a case of homonymy, but not a clear case because they cannot be defined *per genus et differentiam*. What is clear is that for Porphyry as for Aristotle τὸ ὄν is not a genus and, therefore, cannot be predicated synonymously of whatever it is predicated. This term has as many distinct but related meanings as there are categories. See, e.g. *Metaphysics* 998b 22, 1003a 23-24, 1017a 22-27, 1026a 33-b 4, 1028a 10-b 7, and compare with *Isagoge*, p. 6, 5-18.

⁴⁰ For λόγος ὁριστικός, see *Physics* 186b 25, and *Metaphysics* 1043b 31; also the entries in IA, for ὁρισμός and ὅρος.

text of the *Categories* and on the examples given by Aristotle himself to illustrate the text. This interpretation is sound and correct as far as it goes, though it does not go far enough. After all, one has the impression that the doctrine of "homonymous things" goes much further than just the species in the category of substance and encompasses the highest genera in every category. Similarly, the doctrine of "synonymous things" seems to go much further than the species in the category of substance and reaches its individual members which, as sharing in both the name and the definition of their species, clearly constitute a case of συνώνυμα. To this we may turn next.

b. Synonymy

Since the discussion about ὁμώνυμα was lengthy and detailed, and since the same problems seem to be involved in the definitions of συνώνυμα and παρώνυμα, I shall treat them here very briefly. To begin with, it should be noted that Porphyry had accepted the complete version of the description of συνώνυμα which contains the disputable expressions, namely κατὰ τοῦνομα and λόγος τῆς οὐσίας, which were discussed above. In the extant *Commentary* we read in Greek: "Συνώνυμα λέγεται ὧν τό τε ὄνομα κοινόν καὶ ὁ κατὰ τοῦνομα λόγος τῆς οὐσίας ὁ αὐτός." (p. 68, 5-6)

Commenting on this passage, Porphyry remarks that the disputable expressions, which were necessary in the definition of ὁμώνυμα, can be omitted here, since they are implicitly understood (προϋπακούεσθαι). Therefore, it seems very probable that Porphyry, in his lost commentary, had accepted this simplified version of the definition of συνώνυμα.⁴¹

That λόγος here, even without the addition of the phrase τῆς οὐσίας, has the meaning of definitive account is evident both from the examples which Aristotle gives and from Porphyry's comments which follow:

If two things have the name in common and if the definition corresponding to that common name is the same for both, then they are called synonymously by that name Let us consider man, ox and dog, for instance, and let us call them with the common name 'animal.' Now, if we give the definition which corresponds to that name (i.e. sensitive, living substance), it is clear that all of the above share in that definition. For each of them can truly be called a sensitive, living substance. (p. 68, 21-27)

In this connection, there is another point which needs clarification. I mean the divergence of the texts of the *Categories* and the *Poetics* as far as synonymy is concerned. The question is raised by Simplicius, an excellent source of our knowledge of Porphyry's lost commentary, which

⁴¹ SAC, p. 34, 1-3.

he frequently quotes. He observes that in the *Poetics* Aristotle refers to συνώνυμα as "those things which have many names but the same definition" (p. 36, 14-15). As Simplicius correctly remarks, this statement fits well with what Speusippus and the Stoics had called πολυώνυμα. The point is that Aristotle used the same word (συνώνυμα) in order to designate (a) things which have the same name and the same definition, as in the *Categories*; and (b) things which have the same definition but many names, as in the *Poetics*. To the ancient commentators, who seem to follow the Speusippean tradition on this issue, the second case (i.e. one definition but many names) is known as πολυώνυμα.⁴²

It is interesting, and indicative of Porphyry's sympathetic approach to Aristotle, to see how he tried to explain this glaring discrepancy which other serious commentators, such as Boethus, had found to be groundless (ἄτοπον). These commentators had blamed Aristotle for unnecessary novelties in philosophical terminology dictated by a mere anti-Speusippean tendency on his part. Simplicius quotes from Porphyry's lost commentary as follows:

It is not absurd that Aristotle employs the two usages of the term because there is a reason for each. For the many names which name the same thing, e.g. column and pillar, can be called synonyms as having the same definition. Now, if besides the definition of two things there is also a name which is common to them, then *a fortiori* they can be called synonymous. . . . That is why, where the discourse is about genera (i.e. about significant words which signify genera), the second usage is necessary, since it is in this sense that genera are predicated of species synonymously. Where, however, the discourse is about the various types of words and the many names of each thing, as it is the case in the treatises *On Poetics* and *On Rhetoric* III, it is necessary to make use of the other usage of the term 'synonym,' which Speusippus called 'polyonym.' Therefore, Boethus is not right in his statement that Aristotle omitted what the moderns call συνώνυμα and Speusippus had called πολυώνυμα. For they are not omitted; they are treated in other treatises appropriately. (p. 36, 16-31)

Not only does this passage show Porphyry's endeavor to justify the different Aristotelian accounts of συνώνυμα as given in different treatises, but it also contains useful information about the question of ambiguity and its sources, that is, homonymy and synonymy particularly. For it is evident from this account that: (a) Aristotle in the *Ars Poetica* as well as *Ars Rhetorica* agrees with the "moderns" and uses synonyms in the sense in which even today they are used, viz. two or more words with the same reference. In other words, in this case we have one and the same kind of thing with a plurality of names which name it, that is, literally a

⁴² In this case, the singular πολυώνυμον would be more appropriate, since the many names name one kind of thing.

πολύνυμον, as Speusippus put it. It is not difficult to grasp the difference between the "moderns" and the "ancients" represented respectively by Aristotle and Speusippus on this point. For the former seem to pay attention to the many names which may all apply together to what is essentially one and the same kind of thing (συνονομάζειν), while the latter emphasize the one and the same kind of thing which is named by many names (πολύνυμον).

(b) What is more important, however, is that Aristotle in the *Categories* is using the term συνώνυμα in a new and technical sense. For he employs the term in order to denote those things which happen to have in common both the name and the definition. At first glance this may appear absurd. For if both the name and the definition are the same, then it is not clear what, if anything, could possibly account for the distinction between those things. Let us consider the following scheme in hope that it will elucidate this problem:

- (1) two names, two definitions, two things (ἐτερόνυμα);
- (2) one name, two definitions, two things (ὁμόνυμα);
- (3) one name, one definition, two things (συνώνυμα);
- (4) two names, one definition, one thing (the Speusippean πολύνυμον or what we may call "literary synonyms");⁴³
- (5) two related names, two related definitions, two related things (παρόνυμα).

Now (4) is clearly not the case of συνώνυμα which Aristotle wanted to contrast to the ὁμόνυμα of (2). For the many names which may be used to name one and the same kind of thing do not seem to create any logical problems for the philosophers, though they may be of special interest to poetry or rhetoric. Besides, any kind of thing is a πολύνυμον, in the sense that there is at least one name for it in each natural language. For example, the Greek word or name for book is βιβλίον, the Latin is *liber*, the German *Buch* and so forth. It is evident that the same definition can apply to all these different names which name the same kind of thing. Therefore, there are no problems of confusion or ambiguity here.

It is the "synonymous things" of (2) which are very important and troublesome for Aristotle's doctrine of categories, definition, and subordination. For, according to Aristotle, the same name names (as in the case of homonymy) the synonymous things and (unlike the case of homonymy) the same definition applies to them. If this is so, it would seem imperative to understand how two kinds of things or beings can

⁴³ As used today, the term 'synonyms' refers to two or more words denoting the same thing.

share in both the same name and the same definition and still be different and logically distinguishable. An example may clarify this point.

Let us consider a human being x and a horse y . It can be argued that our x (*qua* human being) and our y (*qua* horse) share in both the same name 'animal' and the same definition, that is, "living, sensitive substance." Accordingly it is not impossible to have two kinds of things (in this case two representatives of two different species) which are named by the same name and defined by the same definition and yet they are not the same in every sense. For if we apply to them not the definition corresponding to the name 'animal' which they share, but the definitions of the names 'man' and 'horse' which they do not share, the specific differences will become apparent. It is correct, therefore, to call our x and our y *qua* animals συνώνυμα in Aristotle's specified sense of this term.

c. Paronymy

In comparison to δμώνυμα and συνώνυμα the case of παρώνυμα was the least discussed by the ancient commentators. In contrast to the other two there were not variant writings of Aristotle's definition of them. This is best explained by the fact that in the categorical doctrine the role of "paronymous things" is not as important as the roles of the synonymous and the homonymous things. Accordingly, the treatment of them here can be brief.

To begin with, it seems that derivative names designate "paronymous things". With regard to this issue, the examples which Aristotle gives speak for themselves. The "grammarian" and the "courageous" are paronymously called from grammar and courage respectively (1a 13-15). However, Porphyry specified three criteria which must be met in any case of genuine paronymy:

- (a) Sharing in name (μετέχειν τοῦ ὀνόματος);
- (b) Sharing in reality (μετέχειν τοῦ πράγματος);
- (c) Transformation (μετασχηματισμός) (p. 69, 33-35).⁴⁴

Unless all three criteria are met, it would not be correct, Porphyry suggests, to speak of παρώνυμα. He proceeds to give examples which illustrate how paronymy is destroyed when it fails to meet even one of the stated criteria. Perhaps the most important of the examples which he provides is that of ἀρετή (virtue) and ἀνδρεῖος (virtuous). Evidently in this case there is no "sharing in the name" (in Greek, of course, not in Latin and English) which means that criterion (b) is not met and (in Greek) there is no paronymy in this instance.

⁴⁴ For variations of the list, see AAC, p. 22, 21-25; PhAC, p. 24, 26-34; OAC, p. 38, 35-39; EAC, p. 143, 15-21; and SAC, p. 37, 1-3.

There is no need to consider all the given examples which, in one way or another, violate Porphyry's rules of paronymous things. Suffice it here to state that the ancient commentators considered the paronymous things as being intermediate between the homonymous and the synonymous things, since they share in both name and definition but only partially.⁴⁵

The last point which should be made in this connection has to do with the following question: Why did Aristotle think it necessary to mention the paronyms or "paronymous things" in the opening of his treatise? If the commentators are not mistaken in their assumption that Aristotle, like a good geometrician, had to state and define his terms; and if *ὁμώνυμα* and *συνώνυμα* are so fundamental for the doctrine of categories as to justify their special treatment at the beginning of the treatise, then it is reasonable to seek for the function of *παρώνυμα* in the requirements of the same doctrine.

From the text of the *Categories* it is evident that Aristotle makes use of *παρώνυμα* in two cases: (a) In his discussion of the category of *ποιόν* (quality); and (b) in his discussion of the category of *κεῖσθαι* (position). The relevant passages read as follows:

These, then, that we have mentioned are *qualities*, while things called paronymously because of these or called in some other way from them are *qualified*. Now in most cases, indeed in practically all, things are called paronymously, as the pale man from paleness, the grammatical from grammar, and so on. (10a 27-32)

Again:

Lying, standing, and sitting are particular positions; position is a relative. To-be-lying, to-be-standing, or to-be-sitting are themselves not positions, but they get their names paronymously from the aforesaid positions. (6b 11-14)

Consequently, Aristotle needed *παρώνυμα* in order to distinguish between qualities (*ποιότητες*) and things qualified by them (*ποιὰ*) in the first case and, in the second case, in order to separate the category of position (*κεῖσθαι*) from the category of relation or relatives (*πρός τι*). In this respect, the doctrine of paronymy was useful to Aristotle, though it was not as important as the doctrines of homonymy and synonymy were.

Having discussed the problems caused by ambiguity and its main sources, we can now turn our attention from the names of things to things named after them. We shall consider next the possible division of

⁴⁵ The significance of *παρώνυμα* can be correctly appreciated only in relation to *ὁμώνυμα* and, especially *συνώνυμα* with which they are similar in that they share in both name and definition but only partially. See AAC, p. 24, 2-7, SAC, pp. 37-38, Ackrill [2], pp. 72-73, and Apostle [15], pp. 52-53.

ὄντα, as found in the opening of the *Categories* and as interpreted by Porphyry.

3. *The Fourfold Division of ὄντα*

The attempt to look at things and examine them in their relations to each other, as expressed by the names which designate each of them and as determined by the definitions which correspond to their names, resulted in the distinction of δμώνυμα, συνώνυμα, and παρώνυμα discussed above. It may also be recalled that, according to Porphyry's interpretation, the purpose of the *Categories* was to deal with "simple significant articulate sounds which signify things differing in genus" (p. 58, 15-17). This being so, it is not difficult to understand why the ten categories were considered by him to be primarily a list of those significant φωναὶ which signify the ten highest genera under which the generically and specifically different things are subsumed.⁴⁶

For Porphyry, as for the other commentators, this tenfold division of beings was only one of several possible divisions of ὄντα. On page 71, 19-26, he refers to it as the "μεγίστη διαίρεσις" (the largest possible multifold division) in contrast to "ἐλαχίστη διαίρεσις" (the smallest possible multifold division). Now, whether the smallest division was a simple dichotomy, as the Platonists claimed, or a more sophisticated fourfold division as the Peripatetics argued, was understandably debatable. What is important to note here is Porphyry's claim that in the *Categories* Aristotle has given two divisions of ὄντα, a tenfold and a fourfold, though the purpose of the treatise is not about ὄντα primarily. The passage in which the fourfold division is presented reads as follows in Ackrill's translation:

Of things that are: (a) Some are *said of* a subject but are not *in* any subject. For example, man is said of a subject, the individual man, but is not in any subject. (b) Some are *in* a subject but are not said of any subject (by 'in a subject' I mean what is in something, not as a part, and cannot exist separately from what it is in). For example, the individual knowledge-of-grammar is in a subject, the soul, but is not said of any subject; and the individual white is in a subject, the body (for all color is in a body), but is not said of any subject. (c) Some are both said of a subject and in a subject. For example, knowledge is in a subject, the soul, and is also said of a subject, knowledge-of-grammar. (d) Some are neither in a subject nor said of a subject, for example, the individual man or the individual horse for nothing of this sort is either in a subject or said of a subject. (1a 20-1b 6)

⁴⁶ Although the complete list of the ten categories is given only in *Categories* 1b 25-28 and *Topics* 103b 20-24, all ancient commentators, including Porphyry, accepted it as canonical.

To summarize Aristotle's doctrine and put it in the original Greek technical expressions, the following scheme is obtained:

- (a) "Τὰ μὲν καθ' ὑποκειμένου λέγεται, ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ δὲ οὐδενὶ ἐστίν;"
- (b) "τὰ δὲ ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ μὲν ἐστὶ, καθ' ὑποκειμένου δὲ οὐδενὸς λέγεται;"⁴⁷
- (c) "τὰ δὲ καθ' ὑποκειμένου τε λέγεται καὶ ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ ἐστίν;"
- (d) "τὰ δὲ οὐτ' ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ ἐστὶν οὔτε καθ' ὑποκειμένου λέγεται."

Accordingly, the fourfold ontological division is based on the possible combination of two key expressions and their negations. If these two expressions, καθ' ὑποκειμένου λέγεται and ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ ἐστὶ, be symbolized by A and B respectively, then the above combinations can be rendered as follows by using logical connectives: (a) A & -B; (b) -A & B; (c) A & B; (d) -A & -B.⁴⁸

Let us now turn from Aristotle's text to Porphyry's commentary. I quote and translate:

If I had to give the minimal possible division into genera, I would divide ὄντα, and the significant φωναὶ corresponding to them, into four as follows: Beings are either substances (universal or particular) or accidents (universal or particular). Division, therefore, smaller than the fourfold is not possible. (p. 71, 19-21)

From this statement it is evident that Porphyry: (1) accepted the fourfold division of beings as legitimately Aristotelian; (2) defended it as the only possible "smallest division;" and (3) used more economical and familiar terms to express this doctrine.

The most striking point in this connection is Porphyry's assertion that the fourfold division is the minimal possible division. Thus indirectly he seems to deny dichotomy which traditionally had been considered by other Platonists and Neoplatonists as the minimal division of beings. By dichotomy they obtained καθ' αὐτὸ ὄν and ἐν ἄλλῳ ὄν, that is, absolute and relative being.⁴⁹

Porphyry is certainly correct in insisting that, from a Peripatetic point of view, the minimal division of beings cannot be twofold. For the Platonists it was easy to speak of the first dichotomy of being because for them the fundamental distinction is that between "being-in-itself" and "being-in-other."⁵⁰ The particulars (no matter whether they are substances or accidents) are said to be only in so far as they participate

⁴⁷ Here we have the problem of the status of individual entities in categories other than substance which has preoccupied many scholars recently. Consider, e.g. Allen [369], Duerlinger [430], Matthews and Cohen [545], Moravcsik [553], and Owen [570].

⁴⁸ The possible combinations of A & -A and B & -B are excluded as contradictory.

⁴⁹ Dillon [88], pp. 133-135, traces these two "so-called Old Academic categories" to Plato's teaching.

⁵⁰ As found in *Sophist* 255C, the Platonic expressions are καθ' αὐτὰ, πρὸς ἄλλα.

in the corresponding εἶδος (i.e. universal).⁵¹ Aristotle, however, not only raised the ontological distinction between substances and accidents above the distinction between universals and particulars, but he also shifted the emphasis from the καθόλου (universal) to the τόδε τι (particular) considered ontologically as the *primum datum*.

Porphyry, who was aware of the Platonic approach to this problem, rejected the dichotomy as the highest (i.e. minimal) ontological division in the following way:

The highest and first division could be into two: substance and accident. But it is not possible to speak of them without adding the designation universal or particular. For both substances and accidents are uttered either universally or particularly, e.g. man, Socrates, science and Aristarchus' science Thus we have: Universal substance and universal accident, as well as individual substance and individual accident.⁵² (p. 71, 28-38)

Evidently the terminology used by Porphyry in his account of the minimal division of beings differs from that used by Aristotle. The reason for this divergence is the statement that : "Instead of the names of beings Aristotle took their descriptive and explanatory accounts" (p. 72, 34-35).⁵³ We may now move to the next problem.

4. The Problem of Subordination

Let me quote first the relevant passage from the *Categories* which is to be discussed here in terms of Porphyry's pertinent comments. Aristotle states:

The differentiae of genera which are different and not subordinate to each other are themselves different in kind. For example, animal and knowledge: footed, winged, aquatic, twofooted are differentiae of animal, but none of these is a differentia of knowledge; one sort of knowledge does not differ from another by being two-footed. However, there is nothing to prevent genera subordinate one to the other from having the same differentiae. For the higher are predicated of the genera below them, so that all differentiae of the predicated genus will be differentiae of the subject also. (1b 16-24)

Accordingly, consideration of the genera in terms of the relatedness to each other leads to the fundamental distinction between those which are subordinate (ὑπάλληλα) and those which are not (μὴ ὑπάλληλα). Now, if two genera are not subordinate, then their species as well as the *differentiae* will be different, as the given examples of animal and knowledge clearly show. The situation, however, is different with regard to subordinate

⁵¹ On this see Allen [368], Nehamas [569], and Teloh [620].

⁵² Porphyry calls this division χιασμή (from the Greek letter X).

⁵³ Λόγοι is the word used here.

genera. For these genera may have the same *differentiae*, strange as it may seem at first glance. Does it mean, for instance, that four-footed and winged, which are certainly *differentiae* of the genus animal, can also be *differentiae* of the subordinate genus of, say, aquatic animal? In what sense should the Aristotelian statement be understood in order to make sense?

It was Porphyry's endeavor, I believe, to find a way to avoid these anomalies that led him to draw a fundamental distinction between constitutive (συστατικαί) and divisive (διαρετικαί) *differentiae*. Thus the statement that "all *differentiae* of the predicated genus will be *differentiae* of the subject also," with which the above quotation ends, makes sense if and only if *differentiae* are understood in the sense of constitutive *differentiae*.⁵⁴

Porphyry finds it indispensable to clarify two other relevant points before proceeding to comment on the above passage. These points are the following: (1) Since it is the case that the terms genus, species and *differentia* are πολλαχῶς λεγόμενα, it is necessary to find out in what sense they are employed here. (2) Since the topic under consideration is subordination, its meaning should be illustrated by means of giving an example.

With regard to the first point, Porphyry designates the sense in which each of the three mentioned terms must be understood as follows:

(a) "Genus is that which is predicated essentially of many things which differ in species" (p. 82, 6-7).

(b) "Species is that which is predicated essentially of many things which differ in number" (p. 82, 10-11).

(c) "Differentia is that which is predicated qualitatively of many things which differ from each other" (p. 82, 19-20).⁵⁵

It is noteworthy that the same definitions or rather delineations (as Porphyry would put it) of these three basic terms are to be repeated in the *Isagoge* and have been taken *verbatim* from the *Topics*.⁵⁶ They will come up again in the second part of the *Commentary* where their treatment will be more detailed.

Suffice it here to state that, according to Porphyry, (a) genera, species and *differentiae* are to be found in all ten categories, and (b) the species

⁵⁴ Even modern scholars, such as Ackrill, believe that the text here "probably requires amendment" [2], p. 77. Although he is aware of the distinction between divisive and constitutive *differentiae*, he does not think that it helps to solve the problem because in this passage, for him, "only *differentiae divisivae* are in question." As usual, he does not mention Porphyry or any other commentator in his discussion.

⁵⁵ What "the things" (of which the *differentiae* are predicated) are evidently depends on whether the *differentiae* are divisive or constitutive. Hence the importance of this distinction.

⁵⁶ *Topics* 101b 37-102b 26. The same definitions are repeated in the *Isagoge* pp. 1-10.

as well as the *differentiae* of a certain genus belong to the same category to which that genus belongs. In this connection he states:

In each of the ten categories there are different genera; for the genera of substance are different from the genera of quality, quantity and so forth. Similarly the species which are subordinate to a genus differ from the species which are subordinate to another genus. The same holds for the *differentiae*. (p. 83, 3-7)

This being so, it is easily understood that the Aristotelian "subordinate genera" must belong to the same category. To illustrate this point let us consider the example given by Porphyry (p. 83). Of the three general terms, 'man', 'animal', οὐσία, it may be observed that: (1) οὐσία is a generic term subordinate to nothing, since there is nothing higher than that; (2) 'man' is a specific term subordinate to the other two generic terms, 'animal' and οὐσία; (3) the term 'animal' can be both specific, with regard to the generic term οὐσία, and generic with regard to the specific term 'man'. The relation between subordinate species and genera in a given category is determined by the fact that what is above (i.e. more generic) can be predicated of what is below (i.e. more specific) synonymously (συνωνύμως).⁵⁷

I must return now to the difficult point with which the above quoted passage ends, that is: "For the higher are predicated of the genera below them, so that all *differentiae* of the predicated genus will be *differentiae* of the subject also." It seems that there was a debate among the commentators about the correct interpretation of this passage. For, as Porphyry reports (p. 85), many went astray and, being unable to find any satisfactory explanations of the passage, tried to correct the text in a way "so that all *differentiae* of the subject will be *differentiae* of the predicated genus as well" (p. 85, 3-4).⁵⁸ Thus the original meaning of the passage was entirely changed. To Porphyry's critical mind, the misunderstanding was due to the ambiguity of the term '*differentia*' which can mean both constitutive and divisive *differentiae*, as we saw. This important distinction helps to resolve the problem easily. For, as Porphyry says, "the constitutive *differentiae* are predicated though the divisive *differentiae* are not" (p. 85, 37-38).

Once again, Porphyry assumed the role of defending the Aristotelian text which, unlike other commentators, he tries to understand and interpret correctly by drawing the necessary distinctions and by clarifying the fundamental terms used in the *Categories*. This favorable attitude toward

⁵⁷ This provided the basis for the *Arbor Porphyriana* which was the one of Porphyry's doctrines most favored during the Middle Ages.

⁵⁸ The names of those who attempted the amendment are not given.

Aristotle shown by a Neoplatonist commentator, who happened to be also the pupil of Plotinus, a severe critic of Aristotle's categorial doctrine, is very important for understanding Porphyry's position. This, I hope, will become progressively clearer in the following chapters.

5. *The Twofold Division of λεγόμενα*

There remains to be examined one more problem which was discussed by Aristotle at the beginning of the treatise. The problem relates to the distinction between "what is said without combination" and "what is said with combination." The relevant passage reads as follows:

Of things that are said some involve combination, while others are said without combination. Examples of those involving combination are: 'man runs,' 'man wins'; and of those without combination, 'man', 'ox', 'runs', 'wins'. (1a 16-19)

Now, it has been seen that the purpose of the treatise according to the standard interpretation is to deal with ἄνευ συμπλοκῆς λεγόμενα. For the list of the ten categories is introduced in this way: "Of things said without any combination each signifies either substance or quantity or quality" (1b 25-26). Hence the importance of the distinction between λεγόμενα with and without combination.

It seems that the key concept in this connection is the concept of *συμπλοκή* (combination or composition). The real meaning of this concept in this context is an open question which has puzzled the modern Aristotelian scholars no less than the ancient commentators.⁵⁹ In so far as Porphyry's position on this issue is concerned, it is worth noting that he distinguishes two kinds of combination: (a) That which uses the connective καὶ (and), e.g. "Plato and Socrates," and (b) that which uses no connectives, e.g. "Socrates is walking" (p. 71, 4-7). According to Porphyry, it is in the sense (b) that *συμπλοκή* should be understood in this context. A few pages later he defines "the things said with combination" as "Those which are constituted by combining two or more complete categories, e.g. 'a man runs,' 'a man walks in the Lyceum'" (p. 87, 4-5).

The product of such a combination is evidently a proposition to the treatment of which Aristotle has devoted the treatise *De Interpretatione*. It is the propositions thus produced which can be verified or falsified, so that they become the constituents of syllogism as treated in the *Analytics*.

⁵⁹ E.g. SAC, p. 30, 4; p. 66, 11; p. 71, 6; p. 72, 9; p. 130, 33; p. 132, 31; p. 404, 8; p. 412, 15; p. 437, 18. For a thorough discussion of this problem, see Moravcsik, [552].

It should be emphasized that Porphyry's interpretation of this point provides a criterion of well-formed propositions. According to this criterion, a well-formed proposition must be the result of combining two or more significant and categorically different φωναί. Only well-formed propositions are verifiable or falsifiable, that is, they may admit the values of true or false. If Porphyry's interpretation of the μετὰ συμπλοχῆς λεγόμενα is correct, it would mean, by implication, that the ἄνευ συμπλοχῆς λεγόμενα go beyond the syntactically uncombined terms and encompass propositions produced by terms belonging to the same category. In this respect "Socrates is a man" and "a man is an animal" will be propositions of entirely different types than, say, "Socrates is walking" and "Socrates is white." It is this difference which provides grounds for the important distinction, for the Aristotelian logic, between essential and non-essential or accidental predication.⁶⁰

6. Conclusion

The part of the treatise which precedes the list of the categories was considered by Porphyry and the other commentators of later antiquity as the first of the three parts into which the treatise was divided. In contrast to the third part, the *post-praedicamenta*, the first part was termed here *pre-praedicamenta*. Although his extant commentary stops somewhat abruptly, there is no doubt that Porphyry accepted the entire treatise as authentically Aristotelian. Similar positions on this issue have been taken by many modern scholars as we saw.

The purpose of the present chapter was to identify and analyze those philosophical problems which appear in the first part and on which Porphyry comments. Thus there were four main problems discussed: The problem of ambiguity and its sources, the problem of the minimal division of beings, the problem of subordination of genera and species, and the problem of things said with and without combination. We have seen that there were many controversial points which our commentator critically discussed in connection with these problems.

In the course of my exposition several of these points became clear. First, that Porphyry as a commentator had the ability to detect the possible misreadings and misunderstandings of the text which might lead to logical fallacies. Second, he was very effective in giving grounds to sup-

⁶⁰ Related to this important distinction are the theories of whether Aristotle's categories are a list of the different answers to the same question 'What is it?' or to ten different questions about a given subject, i.e. Socrates. On this see Ackrill [2], pp. 77-81, Cooke [69], pp. 2-7, and Kahn [508]. On other aspects of predication see Gyekye [466], Kosman [514], Kunkel [522], Loux [539], Moravcsik [553], and Owens [574].

port the exegesis of crucial and difficult passages of which different writings have been preserved. Third, although a Neoplatonist, his presentation of the Peripatetic fourfold division of beings was unbiased and expressed Aristotle's position correctly. Fourth, he commented favorably on Aristotle's doctrines of the passages discussed. Fifth, there were some signs that this tendency, which is sustained throughout the entire commentary, determined Porphyry's position with regard to the Aristotelian categorial doctrine in sharp contrast to the position of Plotinus.

In general, in this part of his commentary Porphyry cleared the ground for a justification of the doctrine of categories as a whole and in its details which will follow. Although his work is an elementary commentary, this does not alter the fact that Porphyry constantly searches for grounds to defend whatever doctrines are put forth in the *Categories*. The basis for his defense is a problem which calls for further search and considerations to be undertaken in the following chapters.

CHAPTER THREE

PORPHYRY'S COMMENTS ON *CATEGORIES*, II

Having discussed the traditional questions related to the *Categories* and having dealt with the serious problems of the first part, Porphyry proceeds to comment on each of the categories which constitute the main part of the treatise. The first thing to notice is that his commentary does not treat all of them equally. Following the Aristotelian text very closely, the commentator discusses in detail the first four categories, that is, οὐσία, ποσόν, ποιόν, and πρὸς τι. The remaining six categories are dealt with very briefly and collectively or by pairs. The commentary stops abruptly so that the *post-praedicamenta* are left out.

It is my intention in the present chapter to give a detailed discussion of the four cardinal categories, especially the first and most important, that is, οὐσία (substance). The distinction between primary and secondary substance, the priority between the two, the peculiar characteristics of this category, and its relation to the *differentiae* were very problematic for Porphyry and call for special consideration. The treatment of the categories of ποσόν (quantity, quantified), ποιόν (quality, qualified), and πρὸς τι (relation, relatives) are covered fairly well. For obvious reasons we will not be able to elaborate on such categories as ποῦ (where, somewhere), ποτὲ (when, at-sometime), κεῖσθαι (position, positioned, being-in-a-position), ἔχειν (state, having), ποιεῖν (action, acting, doing), and πάσχειν (passion, being-acted-upon, being-affected).¹

¹ In my discussion for the most part, I have left the Greek names of the categories untranslated. There is no agreement about the correct rendering of some of them into English, as the lists below show:

Ackrill [2]	Apostle [15]	Cooke [69]	Ross [277]
substance	substance	Substance	Substance
quantity	quantity	Quantity	Quantity
qualification	quality	Quality	Quality
relative	relation	Relation	Relation
where*	somewhere*	Place	Place
when	at some time	Time	Date
being-in-a-position	being in a position	Position	Posture
having	possessing	State	Possession
doing	acting	Action	Action
being-affected	being acted upon	Affection	Passivity

*The writings ποῦ (Berlin edition) and ποῦ (Oxford edition) represent the interrogative and the enclitic forms of the Greek word respectively and may explain the difference in Ackrill's and Apostle's renderings.

1. *The Category of οὐσία*

a. Primary and Secondary οὐσία

It is the case that οὐσία is listed first every time a complete or partial list of categories is presented.² The *Categories* is no exception in this regard. Not only does Aristotle list this category first but also he discusses it more thoroughly than any other of the ten categories. According to Porphyry, the privileged treatment of οὐσία is to be explained in terms of the fact that Aristotle's ontology is basically an ousiology. For, Peripatetically speaking, all other ὄντα are either predicated of an οὐσία (i.e. the species and genera in the same category) or they are in an οὐσία (i.e. the various συμβεβηκότα). In this respect, then, the mode of being of anything else seems to relate to, and depend upon, οὐσία. Hence the importance of this category and its special treatment which is evident not only in *Metaphysics* but also in *Categories*. Consider, for instance, the following passages:

Thus all the other things are either said of the primary substances as subjects or in them as subjects. So if the primary substances did not exist it would be impossible for any of the other things to exist. (2b 4-6)

Further, it is because the primary substances are subjects for everything else that they are called substances most strictly. But as the primary substance stand to everything else, so the species and genera of the primary substances stand to all the rest: all the rest are predicated of these. (3a 1-4)

However, in view of the fact that, for Aristotle, this is a term with more than one meaning, that is, a πολλαχῶς λεγόμενον, the sense in which οὐσία is used here should be clarified from the outset. Porphyry states that in other treatises Aristotle had used οὐσία to designate (a) ὕλη (matter), (b) εἶδος (form), or (c) τὸ συναμφοτέρον (the composite of the two).³ The commentator also asserts correctly that the term is used in the *Categories* with the sense of (c);⁴ that Aristotle mentioned the other two in his reference

² Although Aristotle mentions or makes use of the categories in all major treatises such as *Physics*, *Metaphysics*, *De Anima*, *Analytics*, *Ethics*, *De Generatione et Corruptione*, etc., he lists all ten of them only in *Categories* 1b 15-2a 4, and *Topics* 103b 20-35. When the list is incomplete, it usually ends with the phrase "and the others." See also the entry κατηγορία in IA for a complete list of occurrences of the categories.

³ In *Metaphysics* 1035 a 2, Aristotle states: "οὐσία ἢ τε ὕλη καὶ τὸ εἶδος καὶ τὸ ἐκ τούτων." Also, see 1038b 1-3 where a fourth meaning, i.e. καθόλου, is discussed, while ὑποκείμενον and τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι have taken the places of ὕλη and εἶδος respectively. In *De Anima* 412a 6-10 the three meanings are repeated *verbatim*. On this and the related issue of the correct interpretation of Aristotle's metaphysical doctrine, I refer the interested reader to Father Owens [236].

⁴ The word συναμφοτέρον was not unknown to Aristotle (1062b 4). However, he uses the expression τὸ ἐκ τούτων to refer to οὐσία σύνθετος or αἰσθητή which is a composite of matter and form, as opposed to other substances (e.g. 1041b 9, 1044b 3-6, 1071b 3-7, 1072a 32).

to the *μέρη τῆς οὐσίας* (parts of substance); and that the important distinction in this treatise is that between primary substances (e.g. Socrates, Plato) and secondary substances (e.g. man, animal and so forth) (p. 88, 12- 29).⁵

The distinction between primary and secondary οὐσίαι, as well as Aristotle's characterization of the former as "that which is called a substance most strictly, primarily, and most of all" (2a 11-12), was very problematic for Porphyry and the other commentators who happened to be Neoplatonists. It was understandably difficult for those philosophers to accept wholeheartedly the Aristotelian thesis which relegates the εἶδη and the γένη (species and genera) to a secondary position in favor of the particular substance, the concrete individual, τὸδε τι.⁶ Even Porphyry, who was a sympathetic commentator and tried to find grounds to defend Aristotle's doctrines as presented in the *Categories*, did not have an easy task at this point. It is clear, then, that the problems involved in this distinction, especially the question of priority between the two types of οὐσίαι, call for further consideration. We may begin with the relevant passage from the *Categories*:

A *Substance*—that which is called a substance most strictly, primarily, and most of all—is that which is neither said of a subject nor in a subject, e.g. the individual man or the individual horse. The species in which the things primarily called substances are, are called *secondary substances*, as also are the genera of these species. For example, the individual man belongs in a species, man, and animal is the genus of the species; so these—both man and animal—are called secondary substances. (2a 11-18)

This passage leaves no doubt as to (1) what Aristotle means by primary and secondary substances, and (2) which of the two has priority over the other. This priority is not only ontological, in the sense that "if the

⁵ In some cases συμβεβηκότα also can be predicated of a subject but with a difference. For instance, to say of Socrates that "He is a man" and that "He is white" are both correct predications. The difference between them is that 'man' is predicated of him *synonymously* (i.e. both name and definition corresponding to the name), while 'white' is predicated of him *homonymously* (i.e. only the name, but not the definition of white).

⁶ For a more complicated analysis of the meaning of the technical expression ὁ τις ἄνθρωπος, I refer to EAC, p. 162, 5-34. Elias calls the kind of substance which it designates "συνθέτη καὶ σχετική" (compound and relative) and points out that the τις is here equivalent to πᾶς. It seems that by this expression Aristotle tried to say what is easily expressed in English by the indefinite article which the Greek language did not and does not have ("a man" or "any man" *qua* representative of the human species, are possible renderings). In this connection, Ackrill notes, [2], p. 76, that: "He [Aristotle] does not distinguish between the relation of an individual to its species and that of a species to its genus." For Aristotle, however, "the species and genera" were nothing above or beyond the individuals, viewed collectively in terms of their common characteristics. Thus the relation of an individual to its species does not differ in any way from that of any other individual of the same species.

primary substances did not exist it would be impossible for other things to exist," but also logical in the sense that "animal is predicated of man and therefore also of the individual man; for were it predicated of none of the individual men it would not be predicated of man at all" (2a 362b 6). Commenting on this passage, Porphyry accepts and defends both these theses. With regard to species and genera and in view of the fact that they are to be found in every category, the commentator observes that it is important that it be understood that only species and genera in the category of οὐσία are called, by Aristotle, secondary substances (p. 70, 1-10). Then he repeats the two reasons which Aristotle provided (2b 29-3a 7) in explaining this restriction. They are as follows:

It is reasonable that, after the primary substances, their species and genera should be the only other things called (secondary) substances. For only they, of things predicated, reveal the primary substance. For if one is to say of the individual man what he is, it will be in place to give the species or the genus (though more informative to give man than animal); . . . Further, it is because the primary substances are subjects for everything else that they are called substances most strictly. But as the primary substances stand to everything else, so the species and genera of the primary substances stand to all the rest: all the rest are predicated of these. For if you will call the individual man grammatical it follows that you will call both a man and an animal grammatical.⁷

This is straightforward. However, things are more complicated regarding the second point which relates to the question of priority between the two types of substances. How are we to understand Aristotle's claim here that, with comparison to its species and genera (καθόλου), the particular substance (i.e. "this man" or "that horse") is called οὐσία *par excellence*? In other words, how could Aristotle say that individual substances have every right to be called substances "in the highest sense," as he put it, "κυριώτατά τε καὶ πρώτως καὶ μάλιστα," when elsewhere he states that "τὸ καθόλου πρότερον καὶ τὸ εἶδος?"⁸ Besides, in distinguishing the meanings of πρότερον (prior) in the *post-paedicamenta* (14a 26-b 23), Aristotle specifies five different usages one of which is called "prior by nature" (φύσει πρότερον). He explains: "For of things which reciprocate as to the implication of existence, that which is in some

⁷ In Ackrill's translation, this example does not seem to convey the meaning of the passage correctly. What Aristotle meant to say is certainly something different. If we recall that, in *Topics* 102a 18-20, Aristotle identified the ἴδιον of man as "capable of learning grammar," then the meaning of this passage would be something like this: If a man is called grammatical correctly, then every man *qua* man can be called grammatical in the sense that *potentially* every man is capable of learning grammar. Potentiality will come up again later in this chapter because Porphyry made use of it.

⁸ *Metaphysics* 1018b 9, 1038b 25, 1084b 5.

way the cause of the other's existence might reasonably be called prior by nature'' (14 b11-14). Then a few lines below we read:

Genera, however, are always prior to species since they do not reciprocate as to implication of existence; e.g. if there is a fish there is an animal, but if there is an animal there is not necessarily a fish. (15a 4-7)

In light of this evidence, it is understandable why the question of priority between the two types of substances, κοινὰ εἶδη versus ἄτομοι οὐσίαι, was so puzzling to ancient commentators including Porphyry. It seems that, regarding this issue, there were two extreme positions respectively held by some (unnamed) rigid Platonists, who had declared in favor of τὰ καθόλου, and Alexander of Aphrodisias who is reported to have defended the priority of the individual substance, τόδε τι.⁹

Where Porphyry stood in this controversy is a reasonable question to raise at this point. To examine his position closely will be instructive of the way in which a commentator went about his business of interpreting a given text. Let us begin by drawing attention to the fact that, for the first and last time, the otherwise sympathetic commentator felt compelled to blame Aristotle for inconsistency. He writes:

I say I blame him for calling primary here the sensible individual substances and for leaving out the intelligible substances which, according to him, are primary in the strictest and fullest sense, that is, the intelligible God, the Intellect and the Ideas [if there are Ideas]. (p. 91, 14-17)

For the careful reader of Porphyry's commentary the charge of inconsistency is certainly not the most striking point in this passage. For immediately after that accusation was made Porphyry proceeds to search for a formula which would enable him to explain away the seeming inconsistency. Porphyry's solution of this problem is both interesting in itself and indicative of his attitude towards Aristotle's categorial doctrine in general.

Simply stated, the problem which Porphyry faces here is this: As a matter of fact, in the *Categories* Aristotle places the emphasis on αἰσθητὰ ἄτομοι οὐσίαι, while "elsewhere" (presumably in the *Metaphysics*) he exalts the νοητὰ οὐσίαι. In the latter Porphyry includes νοῦς and νοητὸς θεὸς (the inclusion of the "Ideas" is only hypothetical and rightfully bracketed, as we shall see). The task for the commentator was to produce an explanation such that the difficulties involved in the text would be clarified. By making use of his familiar method of drawing the necessary distinctions, he attempts to solve this problem intelligently.

⁹ See SAC, p. 82, 22-32; and EAC, p. 166, 35-37, where the commentators refer to Alexander's καινοτομία in this regard.

The key to Porphyry's solution is the distinction between (a) αἰσθήσει πρότερον and (b) φύσει πρότερον, that is, "prior by perception" and "prior by nature." He seems to suggest that it is reasonable to consider the sensible substance as primary by the application of (a), but by the application of (b) priority will go to the intelligible substances. Assuming that the purpose of the treatise is what Porphyry understood it to be, then he has no difficulty with justifying Aristotle's claim in the *Categories*. The commentator argues as follows:

Since, then, the purpose of the treatise is to deal with significant words, and since the words were used first in reference to the sensibles (for it is the sensibles which we encounter by using our senses) Aristotle considered the sensibles as the primary substances according to the purpose of this treatise. That is to say, he considered the individual substances as primary with regard to significant words because it was these substances which were named primarily by these words. (p. 92, 7-12)

A few lines further down he repeats in the same manner:

Since the purpose of the treatise is to deal with significant words and since the words were used first in reference to the sensibles (for men put names first to these things which they could see and perceive and secondly to those things which, though first by nature, are second by perception), it is reasonable that Aristotle considered as primary substances those which were first named by the words, that is, the sensibles and the individuals. Therefore, with regard to the significant words primary substances are the individual sensible substances. But with regard to their nature primary substances are the intelligible substances. (p. 91, 19-25)

Thus, by utilizing the distinction between substances which are either αἰσθήσει or φύσει prior in conjunction with his own interpretation of the purpose of the *Categories*, Porphyry finds it reasonable to say that Aristotle considers as primary the sensible substances in a treatise intended to deal with significant φωναὶ which signify (generically different) sensible entities in the first place προηγουμένως. If, however, the nature of things were to be considered, then Porphyry thinks that, according to Aristotle, the first place would have to be reserved for the intelligible substances. In this respect Porphyry's position appears to be a mean between the two extreme positions, the rigid Platonic and the narrow Peripatetic, as stated above.

Porphyry is able to strike a middle position because, as is evident from the quoted passage, he introduces a third factor besides (a) individuals (πρῶται οὐσίαι) and (b) universals (δεύτεραι οὐσίαι). The new factor (c) is called intelligible substance (νοηταὶ οὐσίαι) and comprises such entities as God, Intellect and perhaps "Ideas" (if such Ideas exist), but conspicuously omits "species and genera" to which the Aristotelian secon-

dary substances rightfully belong. Consequently, Porphyry argues that priority can go to either (a) or (c) depending on whether "sense perception" or "the nature of things" is used as criterion. The point is that in either case "species and genera" constantly hold the second place according to Porphyry's formula. To grasp what is involved here let us consider the following schemes:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 1. Platonists: ὄντα | b. νοητὰ | |
| | a. αἰσθητὰ | |
| 2. Peripatetics: οὐσίαι | b. δεύτεραι | |
| | a. πρῶται | |
| 3. Porphyry: οὐσίαι | c. νοηταὶ | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 1. \text{θεός} \\ 2. \text{νοῦς} \\ 3. [\text{ιδέαι}] \end{array} \right.$ |
| | b. δεύτεραι (εἶδη, γένη) | |
| | a. αἰσθηταὶ | |

In Porphyry's commentary two comparisons are made with regard to priority: First, between (a) and (b) in which case priority goes to (a) as the doctrine of the categories demands; secondly, between (a) and (c) in which case priority goes to (c) in a way which is both Platonic and Aristotelian, as Porphyry interprets the two philosophers. Preference for (a) or (c) is a matter of the purpose to be served in each case and cannot be determined in abstract, Porphyry thinks. Accordingly, although the priority of πρῶται οὐσίαι may be challenged within the Aristotelian conceptual framework, the challenge cannot spring out of the quarters of "species and genera" which remain constantly in the position of secondary substances, and as such are excluded from νοηταὶ οὐσίαι.

Moreover, although the Platonic Ideas may find a place among the intelligible substances, this does not mean that species and genera in their Aristotelian sense are to be included in such Ideas. For while Aristotle's εἶδη have a double dependence on sensible things and human minds, the Platonic Ideas are separate from sensible things, independent of human minds and, as interpreted by Plotinus and accepted by Porphyry, they cannot be found outside the Divine Mind.¹⁰ In fact, they were believed to be the content of the Νοῦς.¹¹ In this respect, it is not difficult to see

¹⁰ According to Porphyry, *Vita Plotini* 18, this issue was debated in Plotinus' school. It seems that Porphyry's teachers, Longinus and Plotinus, held different views on this which was painful for the young student to reconcile. See Introduction, and Dillon [88], pp. 254-257.

¹¹ *Enneads* V. 5. 2. See also Bréhier's relevant comment in his introduction to this tractate and Armstrong [17] *passim*.

that the Aristotelian "species and genera" in the category of sensible substance, contaminated by matter as they are, could not be included in such Ideas.¹²

Once again Porphyry's strategy to reconcile Plato and Aristotle is discernible here. For him, it is not necessary to choose between the two if it is possible to find a way to have both of them. And he thinks that he gets his way (a) by giving priority to both sensible and intelligible for different purposes and by different criteria, as specified above; (b) by distinguishing between Platonic Ideas and Aristotelian "species and genera;" and (c) by Neoplatonically elevating the former to the noetic level, while Peripatetically doubting the independent and separate existence of the latter. In a later stage it will be seen how Porphyry attempted to reconcile even Plotinus with Aristotle, though the former had criticized the latter's theory of categories severely.

In concluding this section, I should like to state that the distinction between primary and secondary substances is important because it indicates the way in which it was used by Aristotle to turn the Platonic theory of Forms or Ideas upside down. In addition, it is indicative of the method which Aristotle follows in his discussion of the categories one by one. There are two aspects of this method which can be clearly distinguished: (1) The identification of distinct kinds or types of ὄντα which belong to the same category; and (2) the search for the peculiar characteristics (ἰδιὰ) shared by all the different kinds by virtue of which they are said to belong to the same category. Since we have discussed (1) with regard to the first category, we may now turn our attention to (2).

b. Characteristics of οὐσία

Before I proceed to discuss the peculiar characteristics of the category of οὐσία, it is useful to clarify the meaning of the term ἴδιον (ἰδιὰ, in plural).¹³ Porphyry distinguishes three meanings of this term:

In one sense, it is that which is present in every member of a species but not in one species solely; in another sense, it is that which is present only in members of one species, but not in every member of that species; in the

¹² Simplicius, SAC, p. 83, 1-25, distinguishes three kinds of κοινὰ echoing in all probability developments which had taken place earlier:

(a) those which are pure and intact (ἐξηρημένα);
(b) those which are in matter (ἐνυπάρχοντα);
(c) those which are abstracted (ἐξ ἀφαιρέσεως).

¹³ As defined by Aristotle, *Topics* 102a 18-20, ἴδιον (property, *proprium*) is a characteristic "which does not show the essence of a thing but belongs to it alone and is predicated convertibly of it. For example, it is a property of man to be capable of learning grammar."

strictest sense it is that which is present in every member of a species and solely in that.¹⁴ (p. 94, 2-3)

Accordingly, there are two criteria to be met in order to characterize an attribute as ἴδιον strictly speaking: (1) It must be shared by *every* member of a species or by all entities subsumed under a certain category; and (2) it must be shared *solely* by the members of one species or the entities subsumed under one category. If either of these criteria is not met, the characteristic fails to qualify as an ἴδιον in the strictest sense. With this in mind, let us examine the ἴδια of οὐσία, as stated by Aristotle, in order to see which of them, if any, satisfies the above mentioned conditions.

(1) "Not being in a subject."

Aristotle describes the first candidate for the position of ἴδιον of substance as follows:

It is a characteristic common to every substance not to be in a subject. For a primary substance is neither said of a subject nor in a subject. And as for secondary substance, it is obvious at once that they are not in a subject. For man is said of the individual man as subject but is not in a subject: man is not *in* the individual man. Similarly, animal also is said of the individual man as subject but animal is not in the individual man. (3a 7-15)¹⁵

Accordingly, this characteristic is common (κοινὸν) to both types of οὐσία, primary and secondary. It cannot, however, be considered as the ἴδιον of substance precisely because it does not satisfy Porphyry's second condition, that is, it does not characterize substances solely. For as Aristotle remarks and Porphyry repeats, "not being in a subject" is truly said of *differentia* as well (3a 22).

In this connection there are two possible objections which are stated in the form of questions and discussed in the commentary. First, it would seem that this characteristic, stated as common to all substances, does not actually apply to substances which happen to be parts of another substance. For example, substances such as a human hand or head would seem to be in another substance, i.e. the human body whose parts they are. However, this is not the sense in which the expression "in a subject"

¹⁴ In *Isagoge*, p. 12, 12-22, one more criterion is added in order to determine even better the "strictest sense" of ἴδιον which, thus, must be shared (1) by all members of a species or all entities of a category, (2) by them only, and (3) always (ἀεὶ).

¹⁵ On p. 78, 1-5, Porphyry distinguishes the following different senses of the expression "in a subject:" "being in place," "being in a vessel," "being a part in the whole," "being a whole in the parts," "being a species in the genus," "being a genus in the species," "being in power," "being in the power of," and "being (like the form) in matter." He points out that the last one is the sense intended by Aristotle in this passage with the restriction of 1a 24-25.

is used here. Porphyry makes clear, by quoting Aristotle (1a 24-25) that: "By 'in a subject' I mean what is in something, not as a part, and cannot exist separately from what it is in."

The second possible objection is certainly more serious. It is stated by Porphyry in the form of the following question: "In what sense can *differentia* be understood as not being in a subject?" (p. 94, 29). A satisfactory answer to this question would necessarily involve an analysis of the nature of διαφορά (*differentia*) which is very elusive as being between οὐσία and συμβεβηχός. Porphyry attempted to give an answer to this difficult question. Since what he said on this issue is important for understanding several of his doctrines, I shall discuss his views in some detail after the analysis of the second characteristic of substance which is also shared by *differentia*.

(2) "All things called from them are called synonymously."

Evidently this characteristic applies to secondary substances very well and it can be considered as an ἴδιον. But it cannot be accepted as an ἴδιον in the strictest sense because it fails to meet either of the criteria stated above. For (a) it does not apply to primary substances which are predicated of nothing; and (b) it characterizes not only secondary substances but also *differentia* which is said to be "predicated synonymously of both species and individuals" as the following passage makes clear:

For all the predicates from them are predicated either of the individuals or of the species. (For from a primary substance there is no predicate, since it is said of no subject.) And as for secondary substances, the species is predicated of the individual, the genus both of the species and of the individual. Similarly differentiae too are predicated both of the species and of the individuals. (3a 34-3b 2)

From the examples which both Aristotle and Porphyry provide to clarify this point, it is evident that they do not consider *differentia* simply as a quality but rather as a "qualified substance" or as a "substantial quality." For they do not use, for instance, the abstractions "footedness" and "two-footedness" but the expressions "footed" and "two-footed" which, although elliptical, denote concrete ὄντα. They are elliptical in the sense that in each case the word "animal" is understood so that the complete expressions would be "footed animal" and "twofooted animal."

So conceived and stated *differentia* is easily distinguishable from the predicates that fall under the category of quality as well as the other συμβεβηχότα. It comes, however, so close to the category of substance

(secondary) that the distinction of the one from the other becomes really problematic. For it is asserted that (a) like substances of any type, *differentia* cannot be "in a subject;" and (b) like secondary substances, *differentia* is "predicated synonymously." This being the case, a series of serious questions seems to arise: What is that which permits *differentia* to be distinguished from secondary substances? If *differentia* is to be distinguished from both substances and accidents, then what else can it be, given that the ontological distinction οὐσία/συμβεβηχός is an exclusive disjunction of the type either/or but not both? In other words, what is the ontological status of *differentia*?

That Porphyry was aware of these difficult questions, is evident from what he says on pages 94-96. In his effort to find answers to these questions Porphyry advances the doctrine that *differentiae* are not just qualities, i.e. a case of accidental properties, but "substantial qualities" (οὐσιώδεις ποιότητες). Thus he indirectly denies the exclusiveness of the disjunction either οὐσία or συμβεβηχός. He states in this connection:

Differentia is that by means of which one species differs from another; to put it in another way, that which is predicated (as a substantial quality) of many things differing in species.¹⁶ (p. 95, 6-8)

And again a few lines below:

Aristotle contends that *differentia* is neither quality merely (for in that case it would be like an accident) nor substance merely (for in that case it would be included in the secondary substance) but it is this whole: substantial quality. That is why it is not predicated essentially of whatever it is predicated, but as a substantial quality. (p. 95, 17-20)

It seems, therefore, that *differentiae* as described above are a sort of linkage between secondary οὐσίαι (which are predicated essentially) and συμβεβηχότα (which are predicated accidentally). For they are predicated as substantial qualities (οὐσιώδεις ποιότητες). Thus taken together with the highest genus of οὐσία the *differentiae* "ensouled," "footed," "rational," "mortal" etc. produce the genera and species in the category of substance.¹⁷

In so far as the second characteristic is concerned, the conclusion is that it does not qualify to serve as the ἴδιον of the category of substance in the strictest sense for which Porphyry was searching. The reason, as

¹⁶ In *Isagoge*, pp. 8-12, Porphyry provides six definitions of *differentia*, two of which are the same as those which are given here. It should be understood that these definitions apply to *differentia* in the strictest sense, since two things may be said to differ in more than one way.

¹⁷ For the logical and ontological difficulties involved in the Aristotle's treatment of διαφορά and its problematic for his Neoplatonic commentators, see the extensive and excellent study of A. C. Lloyd, [530], and my paper [434].

stated above, is that this characteristic is both too narrow (for leaving out primary substance) and too wide (for embracing the *differentiae* as well).

(3) "Every substance seems to signify a certain 'this'."

Per contra to the second characteristic which was applicable only to the secondary substances, the third characteristic can be applied meaningfully to the primary substances only. For as Aristotle explains:

As regards the primary substances, it is indisputably true that each of them signifies a certain 'this'; for the thing revealed is individual and numerically one. But as regards the secondary substances, though it appears from the form of the name—when one speaks of man or animal—that a secondary substance likewise signifies a certain 'this', this is not really true; rather, it signifies a certain qualification. . . . (3b 11-16)

Evidently this characteristic cannot be the *ἰδιον* of the category of substance, according to Porphyry's criteria, so I shall proceed to examine the next candidate for the position.

(4) "There is nothing contrary to them."

The fourth characteristic of this category is stated by Aristotle in the following way:

Another characteristic of substances is that there is nothing contrary to them. For what would be contrary to a primary substance? For example, there is nothing contrary to an individual man, nor yet is there anything contrary to man or animal. (3b 24-38)

Although this characteristic covers both types of substances, it is dismissed, like the first one, on the ground that it fails to characterize this category solely. For contrariety is also absent from the category of quantity, as Aristotle had noted (3b 29-33) and as Porphyry repeated in the commentary (pp. 96-96).

(5) "Substance, it seems, does not admit of a more and a less."

As stated here this characteristic seems to run contrary to what Aristotle says with regard to species and genera in 2b 7-22:

Of the secondary substances the species is more a substance than the genus, since it is nearer to the primary substance. . . . The species is a subject for the genus (for the genera are predicated of the species but the species are not predicated reciprocally of the genera). Hence for this reason too the species is more a substance than the genus.

This being the case, the question may be raised: In what sense is the fifth characteristic to be understood correctly? Following Aristotle, Porphyry specifies two ways in which it makes good sense, he thinks, to say that a substance does not admit of "a more and a less." First, a primary substance (e.g. an individual man or horse) as a member of a certain species cannot be more of a substance than any other member of the same or any other species. Secondly, a given substance (primary or secondary) is what it is and cannot be more of substance now than it was before or will be later. For, as Aristotle has pointed out, "substance is not spoken of thus" (4a 5). In other words, although it is legitimate to speak of substances as admitting of "a more and a less" in a vertical way, that is, when primary and secondary substances are compared, it seems unreasonable to speak of them as admitting of "a more and a less" in a horizontal way, that is, when a primary substance is compared with another primary substance, a species with another species and so forth.

However, the important point to be made in this connection is that the fifth characteristic fails to meet Porphyry's second criterion because it does not apply to the category of substance solely. For, as will be seen, some relatives do not admit of "a more and a less" either. With this we can pass now to the sixth characteristic which must qualify as the *ἴδιον* in the strictest sense if *οὐσία* is to have an *ἴδιον* in this sense as all.

(6) "It seems most distinctive of substance that what is numerically one and the same is able to receive contraries."

As stated by Aristotle the description of this characteristic reads as follows:

It seems most distinctive of substance that what is numerically one and the same is able to receive contraries. In no other case could one bring forward anything, numerically one, which is able to receive contraries. For example, an individual man—one and the same—becomes pale at one time and dark at another, and hot and cold, and bad and good. Nothing like this is to be seen in any other case. (4a 10-22)

In order that this characteristic be accepted as *ἴδιον οὐσίας*, it remains to be shown that: (a) It characterizes substances solely, that is, it does not apply to any other category; and (b) it characterizes both primary and secondary substances impartially. As we will see below, Aristotle has shown that (a) is the case, but he has not discussed (b). Porphyry discusses both cases and shows that this characteristic can be accepted as the *ἴδιον* sought for, since it satisfies the conditions (a) and (b).

Aristotle has dealt in the *Categories* (4a 22-4b 10) with the possible objection that statements (*λόγοι*) and beliefs (*δόξαι*) may appear as cases

which receive contraries, though they remain numerically one. For example, "suppose that the statement that somebody is sitting is true; after he has got up this same statement will be false." Aristotle does not have difficulty finding that there is a difference in the "way" in which contraries are received in cases like these. The difference is that, while statements receiving contraries remain themselves unchangeable in every way, "in the case of substance it is by themselves changing that they are able to receive contraries." It appears, therefore, that this characteristic characterizes distinctively οὐσίαι.

Porphyry agrees with Aristotle that this is so, since no other category can claim this characteristic legitimately, and proceeds to show that it characterizes both primary and secondary substances, that is, species and genera. The reason, which Porphyry provides for supporting this thesis, is the following: "If Socrates is virtuous or vicious, then a man and an animal can be called virtuous or vicious" (p. 99, 19-21). This way of reasoning may echo the Aristotelian doctrine as expressed in passages like the one that follows: "If you will call the individual man grammatical it follows that you will call both a man and an animal grammatical" (3a 4-6). However, it would be mistaken to assume that Porphyry means to say here that the secondary substances receive the contraries in the same way as the primary substances do.¹⁸ For the species and genera, unlike the primary substances, are said to receive the contraries not actually but potentially, as is evident from the following: "They maintain, however, that animal possesses potentially, not actually, all the differences of the subordinate species."¹⁹

To the possible objection that some natural substances, such as fire and snow, are not able to receive respectively the qualities of cold and hot, Porphyry remarks that in these cases we do not have substances receiving contrary qualities. For fire and snow did not receive from outside their natural qualities of hot and cold respectively. *Qua οὐσιώδεις ποιότητες*, they are part of their nature (p. 99, 15).

Although Porphyry is ready to accept that this characteristic is applicable to both primary and secondary substances, he seems reluctant

¹⁸ Porphyry uses the expression ἀνὰ μέρος (partly, one at a time) in order to explain the mode in which the contraries are received by primary substances. The mode, he argues, is shared by both primary substance and secondary substance *qua* οὐσία, but not *qua* καθόλου (pp. 98-100).

¹⁹ *Isagoge*, p. 11, 4-5. Porphyry's formulation seems to aim at meeting queries such as the following: "If *differentiae* were to be in the genera, it would follow that opposites exist in the same thing at the same time, i.e. mortal and immortal, rational and irrational, which is impossible. But if they are not in the genera, then where do they come from to be found in the species?" AAC, p. 101, 17-19. Once again Porphyry solves the dilemma by making use of the Aristotelian doctrine of potentiality and concludes thus: "Nothing, then, arises from non-being, nor will contraries exist at the same time in the same thing."

to admit that it can apply to all substances alike. He thinks that eternal substances are an exception but, for him, after all, the *Categories* are not about these remote οὐσίαι, as we have seen.²⁰

Since this characteristic was applicable to primary and secondary substances and only to them, it was sufficient for Porphyry to consider it as ἰδιον οὐσίας in the strictest sense. The following scheme illustrates the point:

	Substance		Differentia	Quantity	Relation
	primary	secondary			
(1)	x	x	x	-	-
(2)	-	x	x	-	-
(3)	x	-	-	-	-
(4)	x	x	-	x	-
(5)	x	x	-	x	x
(6)	x	x	-	-	-

Note: x stands for "characteristic applicable to. . . ."

- stands for "characteristic not applicable to. . . ."

And this brings us to the end of our discussion of the first category. The category of quantity comes next. That quantity should occupy the second place in the list of the categories was debatable. Porphyry thought it necessary to explain the privileged treatment of ποσὸν and this gave him the opportunity to defend Aristotle once again.

2. The Category of ποσὸν

a. Kinds of ποσὸν

The method which Aristotle and Porphyry follow in their discussions of the category of ποσὸν (quantity) is the same as in the case of substance. That is, first the different types of quantities are distinguished and then their common characteristics (κοινὰ) are stated, so that the peculiar characteristic (ἰδιον) of this category may stand out clearly. The difference between the text and the commentary is that the commentator found it necessary to justify the privileged position of the category of quantity as second only to οὐσία. This may be considered as an indication that the "order" of the categories was a matter of debate among the com-

²⁰ Unlike Plotinus, Porphyry is explicit about Aristotle's determination to deal in the *Categories* only with sensible, ἄτομοι substances, their characteristics, and their multiple relations to their species, genera, and accidents. For another sense of ἄτομος, see SAC, p. 90, 30-31.

mentators, given the fact that there is a discrepancy between the "order" in which Aristotle listed the categories and the "order" in which he discussed them.²¹

To the question "why the category of quantity, and not the category of quality, comes next to the category of substance?" Porphyry provides an answer on the following grounds:

(1) "Being is simultaneous with being one or many both of which signify quantity."²²

(2) "Of the characteristics of substance several characterize also the category of quantity."²³

(3) "If you take away from a substance quality or whatever belongs to other categories but let it have quantity, then substance can still exist. However, were you to take away from it all quantity, then in terms of continuity and numerical determination it would cease to exist."²⁴

(4) "In general, quantity is nearer to substance than any other category" (p. 100, 10-28).²⁵

Of the grounds that Porphyry provides to support the priority of the category of quantity over the other categories (1) and (3) are sounder than (2) and (4). For (4) may as well be the result, not the cause, of placing quantity next to substance. As for (2) the same can be said about *differentia* also, as we saw. In addition, it should be noted that even (1) and (3) make sense only on the assumption that the discussion of quantity in the *Categories* refers to substances of the sensible world, as Porphyry claims. It is clear that Porphyry's interpretation cannot hold with regard to the intelligible world.²⁶ This, however, is an objection which can be made regarding the whole set of Aristotle's categories whose applicability is restricted to the sensible world to Plotinus' disappointment, as will be seen in the following chapters.

²¹ In the *Categories*, Aristotle discusses the first four categories in the order: οὐσία, ποσόν, πρὸς τι, ποιόν, though he had listed them in the order: οὐσία, ποσόν, ποιόν, πρὸς τι. Also, in 1088a 24, he explicitly states that relatives are ὑστερον with regard to both quantity and quality.

²² For the many senses in which things can be said to be one, see *Metaphysics* 1016b 6-9. Strictly speaking τὸ ἓν is not a number but "ἀρχὴ ἀριθμοῦ καὶ μέτρον" (1016b 18). For the difficulties involved in rendering ἀριθμὸς by number, see Apostle's thoughtful comments [16], pp. 71-72.

²³ The same could be said about quality or *differentia*.

²⁴ Evidently, this holds only with regard to sensible substances.

²⁵ This statement hardly explains anything at all. The question here is to determine in what sense quantity is closer to substance than the other categories which would explain why Aristotle placed it immediately after οὐσία.

²⁶ This kind of substance is what Porphyry calls συναμφοτέρον (p. 88, 17), as we have seen.

Having settled in that way the issue of whether the second place in the list of categories is legitimately occupied by the category of quality, Porphyry proceeds with his comments on it.

His procedure is similar to Aristotle's in that he first distinguishes the various types of quantities and then looks for the peculiar characteristic which, if it is shared by all types of quantity and only by them, can be called the *ἴδιον* of this category as differentiating it from other categories.

At the very beginning of his discussion of quantity, Porphyry remarks that, in regard to distinguishing the various types of a given category, there is more than one way of cutting the pie depending on the model one chooses to follow, that is, the criteria which are used in each case. For example, according to our commentator, Aristotle employed two criteria in the case of the category of quantity: "Discrete and continuous quantities" and "having-ordered-parts quantities and not-having-ordered-parts quantities" (p. 100, 33-101, 3).²⁷ By application of either of these two pairs of criteria a sevenfold division of quantities is obtained. The only difference is to be found in the arrangement of the results of each division as shown in the scheme below:

	a. Discrete	number speech ²⁸
A. Quantities		line plane
	b. Continuous	solid place time
		line plane
	a. With ordered parts	solid place
B. Quantities		time
	b. Without ordered parts	speech number

As Porphyry notes, a continuous quantity is distinguished from a discrete quantity in that the parts of the former have a "common bond" so that "if a part moves, it makes the conjoined parts also move" (p. 102, 15-16).²⁹ If lines are concerned, the "common bond" is called a point;

²⁷ The expression "having ordered parts" does not have the same meaning as the expression "having order." That is the reason why time is said to have order but not ordered parts in the sense in which a surface has (p. 104, 12-34).

²⁸ By *λόγος* here is meant not the statement which can be true or false, but the spoken or written words which in Greek (poetry) can be measured by prosody and meters. Ackrill finds the inclusion of *λόγος* in the quantities to be "odd," [2], p. 93.

²⁹ Aristotle uses the expression *κοινὸς ὄρος*.

if planes are concerned, the "common bond" is called a line; and if solids are concerned, the "common bond" is called a plane. So far the exposition is clear. What seems to need clarification is place (τόπος) and time (χρόνος) considered as continuous quantities.³⁰

Porphyry's argument on this point (pp. 103-104) can be summarized as follows. Any body *qua* body is in τόπος, that is, it has a place, it occupies space. Besides, any body *qua* body is three-dimensional. Now, if the parts of a solid (body) are in contact in the sense specified above, then it would follow that the parts of the τόπος occupied by the given body must also be in contact. Therefore, τόπος must be admitted as a continuous quantity. As for time, it can be said that its parts, viz. past, present, and future, must be in contact in some sense, since the present seems to connect the past with the future by being the end of the former and the beginning of the latter. Time, then, too, can with reason be considered as a continuous quantity, despite the fact that it is the only continuous quantity which is not related to the extended bodies.

There is no need to go through all the details and technicalities of Porphyry's argument which at this point attempts to justify the Aristotelian distinction between continuous and discrete quantities, and follows closely the text of the *Categories* (4b 20-5b 10). I shall conclude the discussion on the types of quantities by noting that, according to both Aristotle and Porphyry, only the seven types of quantities mentioned above are called quantities in the proper sense (κυρίως). All other quantities are only accidentally called so as, for example, when the talk is about "a long action," "a large white," "much motion," and the like.³¹ For what is meant by such expressions is "a large surface which is colored white," "an action or motion which lasted a long time" and so forth (p. 105, 28-35).³²

b. Characteristics of ποσόν

Aristotle had considered and Porphyry commented on three characteristics of the category of quantity in search of its ἴδιον. Two of these characteristics have already been mentioned in our discussion of the category of substance. That means that neither of them characterizes solely either category and, therefore, they cannot be strictly speaking ἴδια. Thus their treatment here can be synoptic.

³⁰ For Aristotle's discussion of χρόνος and τόπος, see *Physics* 217b 29-222b 29, and 208a 28-213a 11 respectively.

³¹ The same examples are used by Aristotle (5b 1-10) and Porphyry (p. 105, 11-35).

³² As we will see in the next chapters, Plotinus considered κίνησις as one of the categories. Surprisingly so did Aristotle in 1029a 24.

(1) "A quantity has no contrary."

To Aristotle it is self-evident that "having no contrary" is a characteristic of all types of quantity. So he can proceed to examine cases which might appear as contrary quantities, e.g. "much and little," "small and large," "many and few." He maintains that "none of these is a quantity; they are relatives" (5b 15-16). Porphyry, however, adhering to the principle that a characteristic *par excellence* should be applicable to all types of a given category and only to them, undertakes to test the applicability of the stated characteristic by examining the different types of quantity as enumerated above. He concludes that: "Although every type of quantity has no contrary, that does not make this characteristic the ἴδιον of quantity because the same is the case with regard to substance, as has been seen, as well as with regard to quality, as will be seen" (p. 110, 15-17).

To reach this conclusion Porphyry had to argue that "straight lines and curved lines," "white surfaces and black surfaces," "true statements and false statements" are not contraries *qua* quantities, but only *qua* qualified quantities. For contrariety in those cases is due to their acquired qualities (p. 106, 11-39). Body and place, however, are two cases which do not seem to follow the rule. For, with regard to body, contrariety appears to be involved in the antithesis "corporeal/incorporeal." Porphyry emphatically denies that σώματα/ἄσώματα constitute contraries on the following ground:

Contraries should be under the same genus and there is not a common genus of the corporeal and incorporeal. Besides, contraries are stated affirmatively, e.g. sweet/bitter, but incorporeal is said negatively as privation. (p. 106, 26-28)³³

Accordingly, corporeal and incorporeal are not contraries in the same sense as other qualities are said to be contraries. They are perhaps the two halves of a fundamental division which encompasses and exhausts the whole reality.³⁴

With regard to τόπος a parallel consideration of Aristotle's statement and Porphyry's comment will make clear that what appear as contraries are actually relatives. The philosopher states:

³³ The first of these reasons, presumably, refers to 6a 17-18 where we read: "For they define as contraries those things in the same genus which are most distant from one another." However, it is not the case that contraries are always under the same genus. They can be genera themselves, as Aristotle says in 14a 19-20: "All contraries must either be in the same genus or in contrary genera, or be themselves genera."

³⁴ According to Simplicius, SAC, p. 83, 20-29, Iamblichus criticized Alexander for having divided οὐσία into corporeal and incorporeal as if it were the common genus of both.

But it is most of all with regard to place that there seems to be contrariety of a quantity, for people regard up as contrary to down. . . . And probably derive from these their definition of the other contraries also; for they define as contraries those things in the same genus which are most distinct from one another. (6a 11-18)

The commentator remarks:

Philosophers do not consider up and down as places but as relations in space. For that which is over our heads is called up and that which is underneath our feet is called down. Given, however, that the universe is a sphere, there is no up and down *per se*. (p. 107, 6-9)³⁵

The general conclusion is that (a) quantities which have contraries are only seemingly quantities; and (b) "having no contrary" cannot be the *ἴδιον* of the category of quantity because, although it characterizes all types of quantity, it does not characterizes them solely. The same reason (b) holds also with regard to characteristic (2).

(2) "They do not seem to admit a more and a less."

Instead of repeating here what has been said already, we may as well pass to the third and most important of the characteristics of the category of *ποσόν*.

(3) "Most distinctive of a quantity is its being called both equal and unequal."

About this characteristic Aristotle has stated:

Most distinctive of a quantity is its being called both equal and unequal. For each of the quantities we spoke of is called both equal and unequal. For example, a body is called both equal and unequal, and a number is called both equal and unequal, and so is a time. . . . But anything else—whatever is not a quantity—is certainly not, it would seem, called equal and unequal. (6a 26-32)

Being the characteristic of all types of quantity and of nothing else, this characteristic seems to meet Porphyry's two necessary conditions so that it can be accepted as the *ἴδιον* of the category of *ποσόν*. But there is a possible objection which the commentator cannot overlook: "In what sense is

³⁵ Porphyry, pp. 108-109, mentions as examples of induction "small mountain" and "big pine tree," which are spoken of in this way only in contrast to other mountains and to other pine trees respectively. The syllogism, on the other hand, reads as follows:

No quantity is said of something else.

Small and great are said of something else.

Therefore, small and great are not quantities.

a man called equal to another man, and a tower to another tower?" In agreement with Aristotle, he remarks that cases like these are not called equal and unequal properly but *κατὰ συμβεβηκός* (accidentally). For "they are called equal not as substances but as entities which have magnitude" (p. 111, 2).³⁶

This brings us to the end of our discussion of the category of quantity. As we have seen, Porphyry's commentary follows the Aristotelian text closely. The commentator gives the impression that he always looks for reasons to justify the doctrines expressed by the philosopher insofar as the distinction of different types of quantity and their peculiar characteristics are concerned. In addition, the exalted position of this category as second only to substance was defended by Porphyry as correct, despite Archytas' arguments against it.³⁷

3. *The Category of πρὸς τι*

The category of *πρὸς τι* (relatives), which occupies the fourth place in the list of the categories, is, surprisingly, discussed by Aristotle third, that is, immediately after quantity. So the category of *ποιόν* (quality) has been relegated to the fourth place. In view of the fact that in the Stoic list of categories *ποιὰ ὑποκείμενα* is listed second, relegation of the category of quality to the fourth place in the Aristotelian list was problematic for the commentators including Porphyry. The equivalent to the category of *πρὸς τι* holds the last place in the Stoic list.³⁸ As we shall see, the same is the case with regard to Plotinus' list of categories for the sensible world.³⁹ The reclassification of the category of relatives in post-Aristotelian times cannot be unrelated to the view which considered it as a non-authentic and somewhat "parasitic" category.⁴⁰

At any rate, Porphyry thinks that there are at least two reasons which can secure for the category of relatives the third place in the Aristotelian list. First, in the category of quantity, solids, that is three-dimensional entities, were considered. An implication of the three dimensions is "the

³⁶ It may be recalled that the same was true with regard to so-called quantities *κατὰ συμβεβηκός*.

³⁷ According to Archytas' arrangement, quality is placed second in the list, SAC, p. 121, 13; and p. 122, 24.

³⁸ The list of Stoic categories as presented in *Enneads* (VI. 1. 25) reads as follows: *ὑποκείμενα, ποιὰ, πῶς ἔχοντα, πρὸς τί πως ἔχοντα*.

³⁹ The order in which Plotinus discusses the categories of the sensible world is: οὐσία, ποσόν, ποιόν, κίνησις, πρὸς τι.

⁴⁰ SAC, p. 73, 25-26 and PAC, p. 142, 10-11 refer to the category of *πρὸς τι* as *παραφυὰς* (offshoot, grown at the side). See also, 1088a 23 where Aristotle says that "least of all other [categories] are relatives a nature or a substance" (translation mine).

more and the less'' which belongs to the category of relatives, as we saw. It is, therefore, reasonable that the discussion of this category should follow that of the category of quantity.⁴¹ Second, since in his discussion of the category of quantity Aristotle had mentioned the relatives, he had to proceed by examining them in order to avoid confusion.⁴² Considering these as sufficient reasons to justify the place of this category, the commentator comes next to address a novelty, that is, Aristotle's opening the discussion of this category by giving its definition.

It may be recalled here that in his discussions of the categories of οὐσία and ποσόν, Aristotle carefully avoided defining them. As the highest genera, they are not definable in Aristotelian terms. Instead of a definition proper, Aristotle confined himself to pointing out the peculiar characteristics which can help us grasp the nature of each category. Well, then, why did he not follow the same cautious approach in dealing with the category of πρὸς τι? For he seems to depart from this procedure when he states: "We call relatives all such things as are said to be just what they are, *of* or *than* other things, or in some other way *in relation* to something else" (6a 36-38).⁴³

From this and other examples which Aristotle provides, the nature of relatives as he conceived of them becomes quite clear. Porphyry, however, remarks that the definition as given sounds very Platonic and is in need of modification which Aristotle makes by stating a little later that: "Relatives are called those things for which being is the same as being somehow related to something" (8a 31-32). The implication of this corrected definition is that it is not possible to have knowledge of one of the relatives, while being ignorant of the other. We may close this discussion by quoting Aristotle's confession on this issue:

It is hard to make firm statements on such questions without having examined them many times. Still, to have gone through the various difficulties is not unprofitable.⁴⁴ (8b 21-22)

⁴¹ Similar reasons are to be found also on page 127, where Porphyry again raises the question of the proper order of the categories in his comments on quality.

⁴² Evidently, Porphyry has in mind here the ἀρίστα ποσά, that is, "much and little," "great and small," and the like. The commentator points out that μέγα and μικρόν are said διχῶς: "For they can have an absolute as well as a relative meaning" (p. 108, 28-29). One is tempted to think that, if Ackrill had made use of Porphyry's distinction, his comments ([2], pp. 96-97) would be much clearer.

⁴³ Aristotle refers to this statement as ὁρισμός, (definition) 8a 29. One can only sympathize with Professor Apostle who raises the question: "Is Aristotle using ὁρισμός in a different sense here?" [15], p. 80. He suggests that "'property' or 'description' would be a better word" which is what Porphyry called ὑπογραφή (pp. 124-125), where also the commentator's discussion of the merit of each description in terms of exhibiting the σχέσεις, συνάφεια, λόγος of the *relata* is to be found.

⁴⁴ The commentators unanimously praised Aristotle for this modest statement. Compare it to *Metaphysics* 995a 22-b 3.

a. Kinds of *πρός τι*

On the basis of what Aristotle says with regard to the category of relatives, Porphyry distinguishes two types of relatives, one of which is subdivided as the following scheme indicates:

Relatives:

- (a) by thought (*κατ' ἐπίνοιαν*);
- (b) by expression (*κατ' ἐκφωράν*)
 - (1) in the same grammatical case;
 - (2) in a different grammatical case.

Consideration of the following examples may help to grasp what is involved in the above distinctions:

- (a) "Great" and "small."
 - (b1) "The slave is called slave of a master" and vice versa.
 - (b2) "Knowledge is called knowledge of what is knowable."
- But, "The knowable is called knowable *by* knowledge."

To be sure, great/small, slave/master, knowledge/knowable are all cases of relatives, though there is a difference in the way the *relata* are related in each case. For example, in (a) the relation is implied but not expressed, since "great" is called so always in relation to something else which is not great; in (b1) the relation can be expressed in the same way grammatically, regardless of whether we take one or the other of the *relata* first; and in (b2) there is a change in the grammatical case of the *relata* (in Greek this change is evident, but in English it is not).

It should be noted here that in the relatives of type (a) are also included the "indeterminate quantities" such as "much", "little," and the like, whereas relatives derived from comparatives as well as those taken from terms indicating positions, dispositions, and states belong to (b) either (1) or (2). The reason for putting all these types of related things under the same categorial head is to be found in the characteristics in which they share. To this we may turn next.

b. Characteristics of *πρός τι*

- (1) "There is contrariety in relatives."

As stated by Aristotle, the first characteristic of relatives reads as follows:

There is contrariety in relatives, e.g. virtue is contrary to vice (and each of them is relative) and knowledge to ignorance. But there is not a contrary to every relative; there is no contrary to what is double or treble or anything like that. (6b 15-18)

Since this characteristic does not apply to every relative, it cannot be considered as the *ἴδιον* of the category of relatives. Besides, as Porphyry

remarks, the same characteristic is applicable to other categories. Thus it meets neither of the criteria stated above.

The commentator, however, felt the need to comment on another problem involved in the quoted passage. The problem is this: Do virtue (*ἀρετή*) and vice (*κακία*) really come under the category of relatives or that of quality? They are mentioned here as relatives, but they are referred to below as qualities. What, then, are they? Where do they belong in the categorial schemata? Is it perhaps possible for something to belong to more than one category? Porphyry seems to think so, and he is prepared to support his position by arguing in the following way:

Nothing prevents one and the same thing from being classified under more than one category provided that it will be considered each time from a different point of view. Take, for instance, a quality. In so far as it qualifies that which possesses it, it can be included in the category of quality. Yet, insofar as it is the quality of a qualified thing (for a quality is always a quality of something which is qualified) it belongs to the category of substance. (p. 114, 8-12)

That virtue and vice are to be included in the category of relatives is clearly indicated by the fact that Aristotle has defined them as *ἕξεις* (states),⁴⁵ which are a case of relatives, as we saw above. Now, if virtue and vice are also included in the category of quality, it is because they are viewed from the aspect of inherent properties. Aristotle's distinction between qualities and *qualia*, which will be considered in the next section, may clarify this admittedly difficult problem of classifying one entity under more than one category.⁴⁶

(2) "Relatives seem also to admit of a more and a less."

What was said with regard to the first characteristic of this category can also be said about the second which is stated thus:

Relatives seem also to admit of a more and a less. For a thing is called more similar and less similar, and more unequal and less unequal; and each of these is relative, since what is similar is similar to something and what is unequal is unequal to something. But not all admit of a more and a less; for what is double or anything like that, is not called more double or less double. (6b 19-27)

Porphyry explains how equal and unequal are treated here as relatives, though they were considered the peculiar characteristic of quantity which

⁴⁵ *Nicomachean Ethics* 1106a 10, and 1106b 36 where *ἀρετή* is defined as "*ἕξις προαιρετική ἐν μέσότητι . . .*"

⁴⁶ In 6b 2-3, Aristotle lists as cases of relatives: *ἕξις* (state), *διάθεσις* (disposition), *αἴσθησις* (perception), *ἐπιστήμη* (knowledge), *θέσις* (position).

does not admit of a more and a less. In defense of Aristotle, the commentator argues that it is a matter of looking at the same thing from different aspects. In addition, one should not confuse the categories as such and their characteristics. For the "ἴδιον of quantity is a quality" and we will see presently that "qualities admit of a more and a less" (p. 115, 5-7).

(3) "All relatives are spoken of in relation to correlatives that reciprocate."

Reciprocity is the third characteristic of relatives. This characteristic evidently does not apply to any other category. It also characterizes all types of relatives, provided that they are stated in the proper way (οἰκείως).⁴⁷ Accordingly, it can be considered as the ἴδιον of this category in the strictest sense. If the examples given above to illustrate the various types of relatives be reconsidered in light of the requirements of this characteristic, it becomes clear that only relatives in case (b1) reciprocate completely and without any change in their expression.

In the same light, it makes good sense, in Porphyry's view, why Aristotle insisted on the point that correlatives should be expressed properly and, if necessary, new words be used (7a 5-7). For example, if we take as correlatives "wing/bird" or "rudder/boat" reciprocation is not evident because the names have not been given properly. But if names derived from the original be assigned to their correlatives, then reciprocation is clear. Consider, the cases of "wing/winged" and "rudder/ruddered." Hence the conclusion:

One must therefore give as correlative whatever it is spoken of in relation to; and if a name already exists it is easy to give this, but if it does not it may be necessary to invent a name. When correlatives are given thus it is clear that all relatives will be spoken of in relation to correlatives that reciprocate. (7b 10-14)

Within limitations such as these, this characteristic is accepted as the ἴδιον of the category of πρὸς τι. It is probable that, due to considerations like the above, Aristotle used the plural τὰ πρὸς τι in order to express correctly the category of relatives.

(4) "Relatives seem to be simultaneous by nature."

Special consideration needs to be given to this characteristic not because it qualifies to serve as ἴδιον of the category of relatives, but mainly

⁴⁷ οἰκεία ἀπόδοσις (proper rendering) is fundamental for determining the relation of the *relata*. More on this issue in *Categories* 6b 28-7b 4, and Porphyry's comments on pages 115-117 of his *Commentary*.

because Porphyry had some interesting comments to make with regard to it. For what he says about "simultaneity" (ἄμα), "priority" (πρότερον), and "posteriority" (ὑστερον) is important for at least two reasons. First, it provides an indication that the *post-praedicamenta* was considered by Porphyry as a genuine part and necessary complement to the categories. Second, it helps us to understand better the controversy about the priority of the category of substance. In this connection, Aristotle has stated:

Relatives seem to be simultaneous by nature; and in most cases this is true. For there is at the same time a double and a half, and when there is a half there is a double, and when there is a slave there is a master; . . . Yet it does not seem to be true of all relatives that they are simultaneous by nature. For the knowable seems to be prior to knowledge. (7b 15-24)

From this passage it is evident that the characteristic of simultaneity is not applicable to all relatives and, therefore, it cannot be their ἴδιον.

Before closing the discussion on this category, it will be instructive to examine the criteria by which "relatives simultaneous by nature" are distinguishable from "relatives prior by nature." It seems that to Aristotle's negative criterion of συναναιρεῖν (i.e. carries with it to destruction) Porphyry added the positive criterion of συμφέρειν (i.e. carries with it to existence). Accordingly, if A and B are relatives, they will be related either as simultaneous or as prior and posterior. If the former, then:

- (a) A συναναιρεῖ B, and vice versa (e.g. if not double, then not half);
- (b) A συμφέρει B, and vice versa (e.g. if double, then half).

If the latter, then:

- (a) A συναναιρεῖ B, but not vice versa (e.g. if not perceptibles, then no perception);
- (b) B συμφέρει A, but not vice versa (e.g. if perception, then perceptibles).⁴⁸

4. *The Category of ποιόν*

a. *Kinds of ποιόν*

By a quality I mean that by virtue of which things are said to be qualified somehow. But quality is one of the things spoken of in a number of ways. (8b 25-27)

It is in this way that Aristotle opens the discussion on the fourth category. If this statement were intended as a definition of quality, then Aristotle

⁴⁸ These arguments were used by the commentators to support their positions in the controversy about the priority of substance, e.g. SAC, pp. 90-91.

would have left himself open to the criticism of committing a fallacy in attempting to define the unknown by the unknown. However, given that quality as a highest genus is undefinable, the above statement cannot be considered as a definition but, according to Porphyry, as an attempt to clarify "the more unknown by the less unknown" if we may use the expression.⁴⁹

Be that as it may, the interesting point in this connection is that quality is spoken of in many ways, that is, *πολλαχῶς λεγόμενον*. Porphyry distinguishes the various types of quality as follows:⁵⁰

- (1) States and conditions.
- (2) Natural capacity and incapacity.
- (3) Affective qualities and affections.
- (4) Shape and external form (*μορφή*) (pp. 128-134).⁵¹

A comparison of the text and the commentary at this point shows that the commentator follows the Aristotelian text closely here to the extent that he uses the same examples to illustrate each type of quality. To repeat Porphyry's comments, then, will be redundant. I will, instead, proceed to consider the characteristics of this category which afford a better opportunity for comments.

b. Characteristics of *ποιόν*

- (1) "There is contrariety in regard to qualification."

As stated here, this characteristic cannot be the *ἴδιον* of the category of quality, because it does not apply to all types of quality distinguished above. Besides, the same characteristic is applicable, as we saw, to some types of relatives. There is, however, a problem involved in Aristotle's discussion of this characteristic which the commentators did not overlook. Aristotle had stated:

If one of a pair of contraries is a qualification the other too will be a qualification. . . . For example, if justice is contrary to injustice and justice is a qualification, then injustice too is a qualification. (10b 17-21)

The conditional form in which the Aristotelian example is given was interpreted as an indication of his hesitation to declare that injustice is

⁴⁹ According to the principle *ex minus notis naturae ad nota magis*, Aristotle proceeds here from *ποιὰ* (qualified things, *qualia*), which are less unknown, to the abstract qualities which are more so. For the coining of *ποιότης* (*qualitas*), see *Theaetetus* 182A.

⁵⁰ Aristotle uses the words *εἶδη* and *γένη* here, but it would be inappropriate to translate them as "species and genera" in this context. Accordingly Ackrill, Apostle, and Cooke all speak of "kinds of quality." Ackrill [2], pp. 106-107, finds fault with Aristotle's classification of qualities, but Apostle [15], pp. 82-83, answers his objections effectively.

⁵¹ In 8b 25-10a 24, the same distinctions are given.

definitely contrary to justice. Porphyry comments on this point as follows:

There were some philosophers who did not consider injustice as contrary to justice. They contended that there is no name for the state which is opposite to justice, and also that injustice is not a state but a privation. For states must be stated affirmatively and privations must be stated negatively.⁵² (136, 24-28)

Porphyry proceeds to argue against the position that states (ἕξεις) are always expressed affirmatively and that privations (στερήσεις) are always expressed negatively (pp. 136-137).

To understand what is involved in this debate, it may be helpful to keep in mind two relevant facts. First, for the Peripatetics there are many ways in which opposites oppose one another and that contraries are only one kind of opposites.⁵³ Second, with regard to contraries, Aristotle distinguishes between those contraries which have intermediates, e.g. black and white, good and bad and the like, and those contraries which do not have them, e.g. health and sickness (12 a 17-26). For him, justice and injustice belong to the former (10 b 12-16), and Porphyry agrees with that. To the pure Platonists, however, this is not acceptable because, although they accept that certain kinds of contraries can have intermediates, they strongly deny that justice and injustice are such contraries.⁵⁴

(2) "Qualifications admit of a more and a less."

With regard to this characteristic it may be observed that (1) it does not characterize the category of quality solely, and (2) it does not apply to all types of qualities. There is no doubt that qualified things (ποιὰ) admit of "a more and a less." For they are spoken of as more and less white, brave, grammatical, and so forth. But is it possible to say the same with regard to squareness, triangularity, and justice? Aristotle seems to deny such a possibility (10b 29-11a 14). Commenting on this point, Porphyry mentions four different views held by four different philosophical schools:

a. The Platonic view according to which all qualities and all *qualia* admit of a more and a less.

⁵² See also the discussion of *παρώνα* in Chapter Two.

⁵³ For a thorough treatment of the different kinds of opposites, I refer to *post-praedicamenta* 11b 17-14a 19. Also, Anton [11].

⁵⁴ EAC, pp. 235-236.

- b. The Stoic view according to which only certain qualities and *qualia* admit it.
 - c. The Peripatetic view according to which only the *qualia*, but not the qualities, admit it.
 - d. The anonymous view distinguishes between non-material qualities and material qualities and claims that only the latter admit it.⁵⁵
- The conclusion is that this characteristic cannot be accepted as the *ἴδιον* of the category of quality.

- (3) "It is in virtue of qualities only that things are called similar and dissimilar."

The characteristic which uniquely characterizes the category of quality and can be considered as its *ἴδιον*, is stated as follows by Aristotle:

Nothing so far mentioned is distinctive of quality, but it is in virtue of qualities only that things are called similar and dissimilar; a thing is not similar to another in virtue of anything but that in virtue of which it is qualified. So it would be distinctive of quality that a thing is called similar or dissimilar in virtue of it. (11a 15-19)

Porphyry agrees with this without comment and proceeds to examine once again the question "How is it possible for states (*ἕξεις*) to be classified under two categories?" The reasons which he provides and the conclusion which he reaches are the same as those discussed above in connection to the first characteristic of the category of relatives. They do not differ from what Aristotle states in the *Categories* (11a-b) and, therefore, they can be dispensed with here.

5. *The Other Six Categories*

Aristotle discussed in detail only four out of the ten categories comprising his categorial set. With regard to two of the remaining six categories, *ποιεῖν* and *πάσχειν*, he was content to remark that they "admit of contraries and of a more and a less" (11b 1-2). He also gave some examples to illustrate what may be called the characteristics of this pair of categories, and then he ended the second part of the treatise on categories with the statement:

So much, then, is said about these; and about being-in-a- position too it has being remarked, in the discussion of relatives, that is spoken of

⁵⁵ One may be tempted to fill the blank here by writing "Neoplatonic." But Plotinus must be excluded because for him non-material qualities are *οὐσίαι* and as such they do not admit of "a more and a less," as we shall see in the next chapters.

paronymously from the positions. About the rest, when and where and having, owing to their obviousness nothing further is said about them than what was said at the beginning.⁵⁶ (11b 8-15)

Hence it is evident that Aristotle, regrettably, said very little about the last six categories in the treatise which was supposed to be devoted to the categories. The question which demands an answer is why these categories were neglected in the way they were. To this question Porphyry has two answers. First, he claims that Aristotle left these categories out of consideration here because he had discussed them elsewhere.⁵⁷ Secondly, the commentator thinks that what was said at the beginning about these categories was considered by Aristotle to be sufficient for an introductory book such as the *Categories* (p. 141, 11-17). As regards particularly the categories *ποῦ* (where) and *πότε* (when), Porphyry mentions their double dependence as a deficiency. For these categories, like all the other *συμβεβηκότα*, depend on the category of *οὐσία*, in the sense that they cannot be unless there are substances to harbor them. But these two categories seem to depend also on the category of quantity. For, as Porphyry put it, "where and when cannot be unless time and place, which are quantities, are" (p. 142, 12-13).

Like the Aristotelian text, Porphyry's commentary stops somewhat abruptly so that both the category of *ἔχειν* and the entire third part of the treatise are missing. Given that other commentators after Porphyry commented extensively even on the category of state or having,⁵⁸ and that Porphyry considered the whole treatise as authentic Aristotelian work, it is not unreasonable to suppose that he had done the same and that this commentary has been preserved in an incomplete form.⁵⁹

6. Conclusion

It was my purpose in the present chapter to consider Porphyry's comments on the second and main part of the treatise. By way of summary, the special features of his interpretation can be stated as follows:

First, he accepts and defends both the number and the order of Aristotle's categories as presented in the *Categories*.

Second, his exposition of the categorial doctrine and his comments on almost all the Aristotelian positions are favorable.

Third, there is only one case in the entire commentary in which the commentator felt compelled to blame Aristotle for what he said in regard

⁵⁶ Minio-Paluello brackets this passage, and Ackrill follows him [2], p. 31.

⁵⁷ Porphyry, p. 111, 10-21, mentions *Metaphysics*, *Physics* and *Generatione et Corruptione*.

⁵⁸ Iamblichus and Simplicius, for example, commented extensively on the category of *ἔχειν*, e.g. SAC, p. 296ff.

⁵⁹ The many *lacunae*, which are found in this commentary, could serve as another indication that the last part of it is missing.

to the priority of the individual substance. And even there, he sought for grounds to interpret Aristotle's view in a reasonable and favorable way by drawing the necessary distinctions.

Fourth, he tried to overcome the great controversy between Platonists and Peripatetics regarding the question of priority within the category of οὐσία, by introducing a distinction between "species and genera" on the one hand, and on the other hand what he called "intelligible substances." By so doing he tried to do justice to both parties which is indicative of his reconciliatory attitude.

Fifth, commenting on the characteristics of the category of substance, the commentator noticed that they are also shared by the *differentiae* and raised the question of the ontological and categorial status of the latter. Once again, he attempted to bridge the chasm separating οὐσία from συμβεβηκότα by emphasizing the role of what he called "substantial qualities." The fact that they are not ἀπλᾶ perhaps explains their omission from the *Categories* which, in Porphyry's exegesis, is about "simple signifying sounds."

Sixth, following Aristotle closely the commentator discusses in detail only the first four and far more important categories of substance, quantity, quality, and relatives. In his commentary, the remaining six categories are treated summarily.

Seventh, the commentary stops abruptly, so that the third part of the treatise is not covered. Other references, however, in the commentary indicate that he considered even this part of the book as genuine, and that in all probability we have this commentary in an incomplete form.

In general, it would seem that Porphyry's purpose was to give a fair exposition of Aristotle's treatise on the categories in a lucid way suitable for the pedagogical goals of an introductory commentary. His comments are basically explanatory and for the most part favorable and defensive of Aristotle's doctrines. The commentator sees the philosopher not as a target to be attacked, but as a valuable source to be understood and utilized for the benefit of the students of philosophy. To criticize Aristotle, especially for errors which he did not commit, was definitely not Porphyry's purpose. He tried to understand the Aristotelian views and sought ways and means to reconcile them with Platonic theories. It was this reconciliatory attitude towards the two greatest philosophers of classical Greece which prevailed in later antiquity.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ It should be noted in closing this chapter that the polemic between Platonists and Aristotelians which Porphyry tried his best to bring to an end, flared up again in the West during the Renaissance when Greek scholars of the declining Byzantine Empire brought the battle which had been going on for centuries in Constantinople and other Eastern centers of civilization to Italy. On this see Armstrong [18], and Bargeliotis [30].

In this regard, then, Porphyry's achievement will be better understood and properly appreciated if viewed in its Neoplatonic and, more specifically, Plotinian background. It is important to keep in mind that this Aristotelian commentator was actually a student, close friend, editor, and successor of Plotinus. Yet Plotinus' position on Aristotle's doctrine of categories is very different from Porphyry's, as the next part will attempt to make clear. A comparison of the two different approaches and a critical appraisal of their respective merit will be possible after the Plotinian views on this subject have been considered. Such consideration will be the theme of the next part of this study.

PART TWO

ARISTOTLE'S CATEGORIES,
PLOTINUS AND PORPHYRY

CHAPTER FOUR

PLOTINUS' CRITICISM OF ARISTOTLE'S CATEGORIES

1. *Introductory Remarks*

Porphyry's interpretation of Aristotle's categorial doctrine, as expounded in the preceding chapters, can be better understood and appreciated by contrasting it to Plotinus' views on the same subject. For, according to our testimonies, Porphyry remained to the end a faithful disciple of Plotinus whose work he studied, admired, corrected and edited with great devotion and care.¹ And yet, the two philosophers seem to have held divergent views with regard to Aristotle's doctrine of categories. Since in the previous chapters Porphyry's views and comments were discussed, it will be useful to consider Plotinus' position on this issue as expounded in the first three tracts of the sixth *Ennead* (VI. 1., VI. 2., and VI. 3.).

In order to avoid any misunderstandings, something needs to be clarified from the outset. To speak of a Porphyrian and a Plotinian interpretation of Aristotle's categories is likely to mislead the reader who may get the impression that both these philosophers were equally concerned with commentary work, which is not the case. Plotinus, unlike Porphyry, did not write commentaries on anything.² As a matter of fact, he, like Socrates and Ammonius Sakkas, was very reluctant to commit even his own thoughts to the lifeless form of written essays. His students had to persuade him to write down his thoughts for their own sake. In that way, they hoped, they might get a glimpse of Plotinus' deep and difficult doctrines. They finally succeeded in their efforts, but not before a decade had passed and the philosopher had reached his fifties.³

Consequently, Plotinus' criticism of Aristotle's theory of categories should not be viewed as a result of his comments on the *Categories*. For Plotinus, unlike other commentators on this treatise, is not concerned with its correct title, its scholarly purpose, its parts, etc. Rather, he is

¹ In *Vita Plotini*, Porphyry gives a detailed account of the school of Plotinus, his personality, his method of teaching and writing, and his relationship to his friends and students.

² A list of Porphyry's works, original treatises and commentaries is provided by Bidez [35], pp. 65-73 (Appendices), and Introduction.

³ All this information is from *Vita Plotini* which is the main source of our knowledge of Plotinus' life and habits before and, especially, after Porphyry's arrival at Rome in 263 A.D.

concerned with the Aristotelian categorial doctrine as found in the *Categories* and elsewhere in the *Corpus Aristotelicum*, particularly in the *Physics* and *Metaphysics*.⁴ It is also important to note, in this connection, that Plotinus considered, criticized and modified the Aristotelian doctrine always from the viewpoint of its ontological bearings. That is to say, Plotinus takes Aristotle's categories as γένη τοῦ ὄντος.⁵ As such, he thinks, they are inapplicable to the intelligible realm of real Being and inadequate even for the sensible realm of mere Becoming. Therefore, these "genera" must be rejected with regard to the former, and they must be modified with regard to the latter.

Plotinus' purpose in VI. 1., 2. and 3. is to determine the correct number and clarify the nature of the "genera of Being."⁶ It is because he interpreted Aristotle's ten categories as rivals of Plato's proposed five μέγιστα γένη⁷ that Plotinus thought it necessary to sharply criticize the Aristotelian doctrine which he judged incompatible with that of Plato. The same holds true regarding the Stoic doctrine of categories as Plotinus understood and interpreted it. This fact may indicate that Plotinus followed the ontological interpretation of the categorial doctrine, which was one of the proposed alternatives.⁸

Of the three essays of the sixth *Ennead* which will be discussed here, VI. 1. is thoroughly aporetic and refutative. Plotinus' ἀπορίαι cover the entire tenfold set of Aristotle's categories as well as the Stoic fourfold set. In VI. 2. we find an elaborate attempt to answer the question: What are the "genera of Being" according to Plato? Here we see a solemn, positive and constructive Plotinus. He sincerely believes that he interprets Plato faithfully regarding the "genera of Being." It is in VI. 3. that he comes to consider the sensible world and attempts to provide a set of categories which, in his view, can adequately account for the metaphysical peculiarities of it. His proposal is nothing less than a drastic reduction of Aristotle's categories from ten to five with some additional Platonic qualifications. Thus, the adopted set of five categories of the sensible world corresponds to the set of five genera of the intelligible world in the Plotinian metaphysical scheme.⁹

⁴ E.g. 200b 28, 227b 5, 1017a 24, 1026a 34, 1065b 8, 410a 13.

⁵ In *Categories* 11a 37, the categories are mentioned as γένη. In *De Anima* 412a 6, we find the expression "γένη τῶν ὄντων" with reference to categories.

⁶ According to Porphyry, *Vita* 4, Plotinus was not in the habit of giving titles to his treatises. The titles, under which they are known today, are those which Porphyry chose as the "most generally accepted" (κατῆσασαι ἐπιγραφαί).

⁷ Particularly, *Sophist* 254c-255d.

⁸ See Chapter One, section 4.

⁹ The tripartite division of this treatise as well as the divisions of other treatises (i.e. III. 2 and 3; IV. 2, 3, and 5; VI. 4 and 5) are probably the result of Porphyry's editorial intervention in his effort to reach the desirable number 54 (6 × 9) which gave the title to Plotinus' book, *Enneads*.

This being the case, it is clear that VI. 2. falls outside my limited purpose, which is to examine only Plotinus' criticism of Aristotle's categorial doctrine, its presuppositions and consequences. For this reason, this tract will be considered very briefly and only insofar as it is necessary for the understanding of the other two tracts (VI. 1. and 3.). It is in these two tracts where Plotinus' many objections to Aristotle's categories are to be found. In the first tract Plotinus, as we will presently see, rejects Aristotle's categories considered as "genera of Being" on the ground that they are neither "primary genera" nor related to realm of real Being. In the third tract he reduces and modifies considerably the Aristotelian set of categories so that they may fit the shadowy world of becoming. I shall proceed to discuss in this chapter the Plotinian rejection of Aristotle's categories, that is, *Ennead VI. 1.*, and leave *Ennead VI. 3.*, that is, the Plotinian reduction of Aristotle's categories, for the next chapter.

2. *An Old Ontological Controversy*

Since the subject of the discussion in VI. 1. is τὰ γένη τοῦ ὄντος, Plotinus appropriately raises the question of the correct number of these "genera" at the very beginning. He states:

The extremely ancient philosophers investigated beings, how many there were and what they were: some said there was one being, some a definite number, some an infinite number: and in each of these groups, some said the one being was one thing and some another, and the same applies to those who said the number of beings was limited and those who said that it was infinite. And since these views have been sufficiently examined by those who came after them, we can let them go. But since these later philosophers, after examining the views of the earlier ones, themselves placed beings in a number of definite kinds, we must consider them and see how many the kinds are: these philosophers did not posit one being, because they saw many even in the intelligible realm, nor an infinite number, because this was impossible and knowledge could not occur, and some of them posited ten of their numerically limited kinds and some fewer (they have said that the foundations of being are not rightly thought of as a sort of elements, but as genera of some kind): but there might have been some who posited more than these ten.¹⁰ (VI. 1. 1, 1-13)

Consequently, Plotinus seems to reject the two extreme views, viz. (a) that beings are infinite in number, as Democritus said, and (b) that there is only one Being, as Parmenides claimed.¹¹ In agreement with Plato and

¹⁰ This passage echoes Aristotle's discussion at the beginning of the first book of *Physics*, especially 184b-186a.

¹¹ Plotinus does not mention the representatives of each doctrine. It was not his habit to refer to other philosophers by name, except for Plato. But Aristotle mentions Parmenides and Democritus as holding respectively the monistic and the pluralistic doctrines of reality.

Aristotle he admits that there are many ontic genera.¹² The question, therefore, remains: How many are they? Taking ten as a basis Plotinus distinguishes three groups of philosophers holding different views on this issue:

- (1) Those who postulate ten genera.
- (2) Those who postulate less than ten genera.
- (3) Those who postulate more than ten genera.

Evidently, group (1) is to be identified with the Peripatetics. Both Stoics and Platonists belong to group (2). Who was supposed to make up group (3) is not easy to specify because Plotinus does not discuss this case.¹³

What he does consider and discuss in succession are the tenfold, the fourfold and the fivefold divisions of the genera. Respectively these can be identified as the Peripatetic, the Stoic and the Platonic positions on this issue.¹⁴ Of all these divisions the most important for my purpose here, which is to discuss Plotinus' criticism of Aristotle's categories, is evidently the Peripatetic division with which I shall begin.

3. *The Tenfold Division of ὄντα*

With regard to the tenfold division of genera Plotinus states:

First, then, we must take the opinion which divides beings into ten, and see whether we think the philosophers are saying that there are ten genera which fall under the common name of "being," or ten categories. For they say, and say rightly that being does not mean the same thing in all ten: but we should rather ask them this first, whether the ten are there in the same way in the intelligible beings and the beings perceived by sense, or whether they are all in the beings of the sense-world, but in the intelligibles some are there and some not: for it certainly cannot be the other way round. At this point we must examine which of the ten are also there in the intelligible, and if the things there can be brought under one genus with those here below, or the term "substance" is used ambiguously of that there and this here. But if this is so, then there are more than ten genera. But if "substance" is used in the same sense there as here, it would be absurd for it to mean the same thing when applied to primary beings and those which come after them, since there is no common genus of things among which

¹² *Metaphysics* 1065b 15.

¹³ To the question "Who were those who posited more than ten genera?" the answer, according to Henry and Schwyzer, is *Peripatetici quos impugnât Dexippus In Categorias* 1. 37, p. 32. The text, though, "εἰεν δ' ἂν τινες οἱ πλείω τούτων", does not assert as a fact that there were some who posited more than ten but, rather, it seems to state an open possibility.

¹⁴ Although Plotinus does not mention Aristotle here, the tenfold division is clearly identified as Peripatetic.

there is priority and posterity. But in their classification they are not speaking about the intelligible beings: so they did not want to classify all beings, but left out those which are most authentically beings.¹⁵ (VI. 1. 1, 15-30)

In this lengthy passage, there are several points which need to be discussed. First, Plotinus seems to admit the Aristotelian view that the term τὸ ὄν is not used synonymously with reference to the ten genera.¹⁶ He goes a step farther to make the point that there is homonymy involved in the usage of the term οὐσία as applied to beings which belong to the intelligible and the sensible realms.¹⁷

Second, the distinction between the sensible realm and the intelligible realm plays a fundamental role in the Plotinian metaphysical system and provides the main grounds for Plotinus' criticism of the Aristotelian doctrine of categories. The dilemma in which Plotinus puts the Peripatetics is the following: (a) Either the same set of "genera" applies to both realms, in which case there should be a common genus to embrace primary and secondary or derivative ὄντα which, in Aristotelian terms, is not possible,¹⁸ or (b) the proposed set of "genera" is not the same for both realms, in which case their number should be increased. The only way to escape the horns of this dilemma is by neglecting the intelligible realm which, for Plotinus, is the realm of "the most authentically beings." He believed that the Peripatetics did just that. Yet, he did not hesitate to criticize the doctrine of categories on the ground that they are inapplicable to the intelligible realm.¹⁹

Third, Plotinus makes an important distinction here between πρώτως ὄντα and ὕστερα ὄντα, that is, "primary beings" and "posterior beings" (or, as Armstrong renders it, "those which come after"). This distinction may remind us of the Aristotelian distinction between primary and secondary substances.²⁰ There are significant differences, however, between the two expressions which should not be overlooked. For (a) it should be noted that Aristotle's distinction is restricted only to one genus of being, namely οὐσία, while Plotinus refers to ὄντα in general; (b) Plotinus uses the term ὕστερα which may suggest the derivative character

¹⁵ Plotinus' reference is to Peripatetics as well as Stoics, both of whom he criticizes in VI. 1.

¹⁶ In *Metaphysics* 998b 22ff., Aristotle points out the logical fallacies which follow from the hypothesis that τὸ ὄν and τὸ ἔν are γένη.

¹⁷ The relation between the two realms will be discussed in Chapter Five, section 2.

¹⁸ The impossibility is evident from the fact that what characterizes the different species of one and the same genus is not priority or posteriority but simultaneity, *Categories* 14b 30ff.

¹⁹ CAG IV, part 2. I have pointed this out in my paper [437].

²⁰ *Categories*, Chapter 5, and the discussion in Chapter Three, section 1, subsection (a).

of the sensible beings;²¹ and most important, (c) unlike Aristotle, who in the *Categories* gave priority to the sensibles, Plotinus insists upon the priority of the intelligibles.²² In this respect Plotinus would seem to be closer to Plato, though it would be a serious mistake to confuse Platonic εἶδη with Plotinian γένη.²³

Fourth, Plotinus seems to distinguish between "genera" and "categories."²⁴ He accepts Aristotle's stipulative definition of the term 'genus' and he repeats it almost *verbatim*.²⁵ But he tries to show that this definition does not apply to Aristotle's categories which, therefore, cannot be considered as "genera" in Plotinus' interpretation. Plotinus' main aim, in the discussion of the present tract, is to point out that none of the ten categories can be a "genus" and much less a "genus of Being." Οὐσία, for example, Plotinus argues, cannot be a genus of all the "so-called sensible substances,"²⁶ because it is not equally predicated of form, matter, and the composite. What all the so-called substances of the sensible world have in common, is not enough to give them the unity of a "genus," though it may distinguish them from other ὄντα as a separate category.²⁷ Hence Plotinus' query whether we are to understand "ten genera which fall under the common name of "being," or ten categories." Even if all sensible substances could fall under a single "genus," this "genus," according to Plotinus, would be a "genus" of being only homonymously in comparison to the realm of real Being.²⁸ As

²¹ In Plotinus' doctrine of ὑποστάσεις, Intellect proceeds from the One, Soul proceeds from the Intellect, while Nature is the product of the Soul's operation on matter through λόγος. On the relations of these hypostatic realities, I refer to Henry's introduction to MacKenna's translation of the *Enneads*, xxxiii-li; also the fundamental works of Inge, [152], Armstrong, [17] and [18], Bréhier, [46], Arnou [21], Trouillard, [328] and [329], and Schwyzer, [601].

²² *Enneads* VI. 3. 5.

²³ In Chapter Five we will see the reason why Plato's Forms together with Aristotle's categories are excluded from Plotinus' list of "genera of Being."

²⁴ Aristotle used the following expressions in reference to the categories:

"γένη τῶν ὄντων," *De Anima* 412a 6;

"κατηγορίαι τοῦ ὄντος," *Physics* 200b 28;

"σχήματα τῆς κατηγορίας," *Metaphysics* 1017a 23;

"κατηγορήματα," *Physics* 201a 1;

"κατηγορούμενα," *Metaphysics* 1017a 25.

²⁵ *Enneads* VI. 2. 8, 42-43; and 10, 37-40.

²⁶ The Plotinian expression οὐσία λεγομένη is variously rendered by other scholars. E.g. "ambiguous substance" (Armstrong), "what passes as substance" (MacKenna), "pseudo-substance" (Anton). I prefer the rendering "so-called substance" because it better captures the irony of λεγομένη.

²⁷ In a final analysis the difference between the terms "genus" and "category," as used by Plotinus, is a matter of more and less unity. On this see Rutten, [281], pp. 45-56, and Wurm, [360], pp. 101-102, 117-118, 147-152, and Chapter Five of his book *passim*.

²⁸ On this ambiguity Plotinus' "nominalism" is based. See Lloyd [530], Rutten [281], pp. 10ff, Wurm [360], pp. 134ff.

will be seen, Plotinus prefers to call the sensible being Becoming (τὸ γινόμενον), in contrast to real Being (τὸ ὄν).²⁹

These four points clearly indicate the direction and strategy of Plotinus' discussion and criticism of Aristotle's categories. He will view the doctrine from his own metaphysical scheme and will contrast it to Plato's theory of the *maxima genera*. With the necessary adaptations and qualifications he will attempt to find a place for each of these doctrines in his system.

Having examined some of Plotinus' more general objections to Aristotle's categorial doctrine, I can proceed now to examine his doubts with regard to each particular category. I will begin at the beginning, that is, with the category of οὐσία.

a. Plotinus on Substance

In the next two chapters (2 and 3) of the present tract (VI. 1.) Plotinus considers the first Aristotelian category and tries to discover the sense in which οὐσία can be considered as one of the genera of Being. First of all, he excludes the possibility of there being a single entity embracing the substances of both the sensible and the intelligible realms on the ground that such a hypothesis leads to absurdities. For:

That there cannot be one common substantiality applying to both intelligible and sensible substance has been said already. And besides, there will [if this is so] be something before both intelligible and sensible substance, which is something else and is predicated of both, and this could not be either body or bodyless: for [if it is] body will be bodyless, or the bodyless body. (VI. 1. 2, 2-8)

Plotinus proposes that, if we restrict our investigations within the realm of the sensible existents, it may be possible to determine the common ground which is shared by all entities designated as substances, that is, "matter, form and the composite of both."³⁰ The problem is that these entities are not equal "in respect of substance" because "it is said that form is more substance than matter—quite correctly: but there are those who would say that matter is more substance" (VI. 1. 2, 10-12).³¹

²⁹ *Enneads* VI. 2. 1, 32-33; and *Timaeus* 27d, "Τί τὸ ὄν αἰεί, γένεσιν δὲ οὐκ ἔχον, καὶ τὸ τὸ γινόμενον μὲν αἰεί, ὃν δ' οὐδέποτε." Compare this to *Metaphysics* 1028b 2-4, regarding the question τὶ τὸ ὄν?

³⁰ Note here that Plotinus does not stay within the limits of the sensible substances. From οὐσία νοηταί he goes all the way down to the components of οὐσία αἰσθηταί.

³¹ The Stoics are evidently meant here. Chapters 24-30 are devoted to the criticism of their categories, as we will see below.

Then comes the Aristotelian distinction between primary and secondary substances which Plotinus finds questionable. He observes: "But what could the substances which they call primary have in common with the secondary ones, when the secondary ones derive their name of substances from those prior to them?" (*Ibid.* 12-13). As we have seen, in the *Categories* Aristotle calls primary substances such individuals as "a man" and "a horse." The species and genera of the individual substances are called secondary substances. Plotinus cannot accept this doctrine. As a pure Platonist, he thinks that priority must be given to the intelligibles in which the species and genera are included. On this subject Porphyry, it may be recalled, tried to do justice to both schools, the Peripatetic and the Platonic, by utilizing the distinction between "prior by perception" and "prior by nature."³²

There remain two points which Plotinus discussed against the thesis that substance cannot be one single genus: (a) its indefinability and (b) the fact that what are stated as its characteristics (ἰδιαι) are not "applicable to all substances alike" (VI. 1. 2, 15-18). Now, this line of criticism is, to say the least, curious. For if substance is a *summun genus* and if a definition, in its Aristotelian sense, is the outcome of the blending of the genus and the *differentiae*, then it is obvious that οὐσία cannot be defined. For there is no genus, which is higher than the *definiendum* itself, to serve as the starting point (ἀρχή) of its definition. So, strictly speaking, it is impossible to define substance, as Porphyry has pointed out in his *Commentary*.³³ The conclusion of all this questioning of Plotinus seems to be that substance cannot be a "genus" in the sense of there being a "common characteristic" (κοινόν τι) shared equally by all these entities which are named after it.³⁴

This is the reason why Plotinus attempts another approach in the third chapter. He seeks a more suitable meaning of the term 'genus.' For 'genus' may mean not only "that which is predicated essentially of many things differing in species" but also the "common origin" out of which many offspring come, i.e. the genus of the Heraclids. He explains:

But ought we really to call substance one category, collecting together intelligible substance, matter, form and the composite of both? This would be like saying that the genus [or clan] of the Heraclids was a unity, not in the sense of a unity common to all its members, but because all come from one common ancestor: for the intelligible substance would be so primarily,

³² See Chapter Three above, section 1, subsection a.

³³ PAC, *passim*, especially pp. 93-94.

³⁴ About the different meanings of the term 'genus' see *Metaphysics* 1024 a 29-b 16; and *Isagoge*, pp. 1-2.

and the others secondarily and less. But what prevents all things from being one category? For everything else which is said to exist derives from substance. (VI. 1. 3, 1-7)

So, in the final analysis, even this alternative must be rejected. The reason which Plotinus gives for this rejection is that, if accepted, it would give the impression that everything can be included in a single genus, which is not acceptable. For Plotinus is convinced that there are many genera, and his test is to determine their correct number. He is prepared to make a concession: "Let all the so-called substances, certainly, be akin in this way and have something over and above the other genera" (VI. 1. 3, 10-12). But what is this "something?" Is it perhaps to be found among those characteristics which Aristotle had adduced and which Plotinus enumerates in VI. 1. 3, 12-19? Consider his conclusion:

But one might say that these are peculiar properties of substances as compared with other things, and for this reason one might collect them into one and call them substances, but one would not be speaking of one genus, nor would one yet be making clear the concept and nature of substance. (*Ibid.* 19-23)

To put the matter in another way, Plotinus seems to argue as follows: Aristotle's definition of genus is not applicable to his category of substance which is, after all, indefinable. It would seem that οὐσία αἰσθητή lacks "the unity of a genus" and its nature remains unknown as far as Aristotle's theory of categories is concerned. Therefore, Aristotle was mistaken in considering sensible substance as "a genus of Being." According to Plotinus, the most one can say about it is that the sensible so-called substance has the unity of a category. This pattern of argument is repeated in the discussions of the other Aristotelian so-called "genera."

There is no doubt that Plotinus' criticism of the category of substance, considered as a "genus of Being," is very acute. Aristotle had used the term 'genus' in both his logical and his ontological treatises.³⁵ In a critical way, Plotinus applies what Aristotle says about genera in his *Topics* to the *Metaphysics* and draws certain logical implications. His point is that one is forced either to reject the use of γένος as Aristotle defined it or else to admit that the categories cannot be called "genera." He chose the second alternative for obvious reasons.

³⁵ In *Topics* 102a 32-33, 'genus' is defined as follows: "γένος δ' ἐστὶ τὸ κατὰ πλείονων καὶ διαφερόντων τῷ εἶδει ἐν τῷ τί ἐστι κατηγορούμενον". Also, 108b 22-23; *Metaphysics* 995b 29, 998b 15, 999a 31 and elsewhere.

b. Plotinus on Quantity

The next two chapters (4 and 5) are devoted to Aristotle's category of quantity (*ποσόν*). In order to follow Plotinus' criticism it may help to recall that Aristotle distinguishes in the *Categories* (4b 20-5b 11) seven different types of *ποσά* which he classifies as continuous quantities and discrete quantities.³⁶ It is this classification which Plotinus questions first:

But now, if they are going to say that the continuous is a quantum in so far as it is continuous, the discontinuous would not be a quantum: but if the continuous is a quantum incidentally, what is this being quantitative which is common to both? (VI. 1. 4, 5-8)

Plotinus proceeds to accept numbers (*ἀριθμοί*) as quantities, though he remarks that it is not clear "what their nature is in virtue of which they are called *quanta*" (VI. 1. 4, 10). However, he has some difficulty in seeing how geometrical magnitudes (*μεγέθη*), such as lines, planes and solids can be considered as quantities, which was Aristotle's view. If they become *quanta* by being measured, then, Plotinus thinks, they are called *quanta* not essentially but accidentally. He reasons:

On the other hand, line and surface and body are not called quantities; they are called magnitudes: They become known as quantities only when they are rated by number—two yards, three yards. Even the natural body becomes a quantity when measured, as does the space which it occupies; but this is quantity accidental, not quantity essential; what we seek to grasp is not accidental quantity but Quantity independent and essential, Quantity-Absolute. Three oxen is not a quantity; it is their number, the three, that is Quantity; for in three oxen we are dealing with two categories.³⁷ (VI. 1. 4, 10-19)

According to Plotinus' argument, what Aristotle called *ποσά* belong really to two categories; for "two yards," "three oxen," and "a line of a certain length" are only accidental quantities, since these expressions involve two separate categories, that is, numbers and substances which happen to be "so and so" when measured or counted. The same is true with regard to mathematical bodies (solids), surfaces and lines which become known as quantities only when measured, that is, only when they are limited by number. This being the case, it seems reasonable for Plotinus to assert that magnitudes are classed as quantities: "Not because they are so in the strict sense, but because they approximate to Quantity, and because objects in which magnitudes inhere are

³⁶ See Chapter III, section 2.

³⁷ In *Categories* chapter 6, Aristotle used the same distinction in a somewhat different sense. MacKenna's translation of this passage is much clearer than Armstrong's and preferable.

themselves designated as quantities" (*Ibid.* 44-45). Plotinus, then, distinguishes between accidental quantities which "inhere" in the objects and authentic Quantity which is independent and belongs to the intelligible realm.

Accordingly, magnitudes are identified as accidental quantities which are only "approximate to Quantity" and only numbers are supposed to constitute authentic Quantity. Things, however, become more complicated in view of the fact that, for Plotinus, "numbers in and by themselves" are called substances (οὐσίαι), while those in which things participate and by virtue of which things can be counted and measured exist, "like the rulers and measuring-pots," apart from their subjects. But then the problem is how measures (μέτρα) can be quantities. Plotinus answers as follows:

Perhaps because, since they are among the things that exist, if they do not fit into any of the categories, they will be what they are called and will be placed in the category called quantity. For their unit marks off one thing, and then goes on to another, and number indicates how many there are, and soul measures the multiplicity using number to help it. Therefore when it measures it does not measure what a thing is: for it says "one" and "two," whatever they are and even if they are opposites: but it does not measure what state a thing is in either, warm or beautiful for instance, but how many things there are. Number itself then, whether it is regarded in itself or in the things which participate in it, is quantitative, but its participants are not. So not the "three cubits long" but the "three."³⁸ (VI. 1. 4, 34-44)

Considerations such as these seem to point towards the conclusion which Plotinus wants to reach, that is, that there is not a "single genus" which embraces both the accidental quantities of the sensible world and the authentic Quantity, the pure units or monads of the intelligible world. Thus it is not surprising that the discussion of the present chapter ends in the following way:

There is not, then, one genus in the proper sense, but one category which gathers in the things that are somehow near quanta in the primary and secondary sense. But we [Platonists] must investigate how the numbers in and by themselves are substances, or whether they too are a kind of quantum: but, whichever way they are, those numbers would have nothing in common with these numbers here below, except the name alone. (*Ibid.* 50-55)

Again, the implication would seem to be that Aristotle was mistaken in conceiving of ποσά as one "genus of Being." For Plotinus, Aristotle's quantities lack the strict "unity of a genus," though they may be con-

³⁸ The reason for this being so is that "they exist independently" (VI. 1. 4, 24-25).

sidered as a "category", that is, a "grouping together" of entities which cannot be adapted to any one of the other categories.

Next, Plotinus proposes to examine in what sense λόγος (speech) and χρόνος (time) are to be understood as quantities, as Aristotle claimed. Speech in the sense of sound, Plotinus argues, contrary to Ackrill, [2], p. 93, is subject to measurement and, thus, quantitative. "Yet in so far as it is speech it is not a quantum: for it is something significant, like noun and verb" (VI 1.5, 2-4). Since speech cannot be considered as a quantity in its essential nature, Plotinus proceeds to define it in terms of two other Aristotelian categories, action and passion. He states:

Like theirs, its matter is the air: for in fact it is composed of them: but it is rather the impact which is speech, and not just simply the impact but the resulting impression which so to speak shapes the air: it is therefore an action and a significant action. Certainly one would more reasonably class this movement according to the impact as an action and the corresponding movement as an affection, or say that each of them was an action of one thing and an affection of another, or an action upon the substrate and an affection in the substrate. (VI. 1. 5, 5-10)

In this respect, then, Aristotle would seem to have oversimplified the matter when he considered speech simply as a kind of quantity. He viewed λόγος only as φωνή which, as sound or air, can certainly be measured. But Plotinus thinks that, if Aristotle had taken into account the fact that speech is not just sound but significant articulate sound, he would have realized that he needed more than one category to account for it. (*Ibid.* 12-13).

With regard to time two positions are possible: (a) Either we consider it as a "measure or standard" (μέτρον), in which case we must determine "what it is that measures," or (b) we consider it as "something measured" (μετρούμενον), in which case Plotinus is prepared to ". . . let it be a quantum in respect of being of a certain length, a year's length for instance: but in respect of being time it is some different nature" (*Ibid.* 17-18).³⁹

As to what the "nature of time" is, an indication is given at the beginning of Plotinus' discussion on quantity where the continuous quantities (magnitudes, space, time) as well as the discrete quantities (numbers) are mentioned with the remark that ". . . and they say that movement is quantified by the quantum of time, though perhaps, conversely, time takes its continuity from movement" (VI. 1. 4, 2-5). Accordingly, it is not time which makes κίνησις quantitative. Rather it is motion which gives continuity to time.⁴⁰ Plotinus' assertion that time is παρακολούθημα

³⁹ Also, *Physics* 220a 24.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 220b 25-26, Aristotle says that time and motion define each other. In *Metaphysics* 1020a 26-32, both of them are classed as "κατὰ συμβεβηκός ποσά".

κινήσεως sounds very modern because it makes time relative and dependable upon motion.⁴¹

The discussion on quantity ends with Plotinus' remark that what Aristotle considers as the characteristic of quantity in the strictest sense can be applied only to authentic Quantity:

But that "equal and unequal are characteristic of the quantum"⁴² must be understood of the quantum itself, not of the things which participate in it, except incidentally, not in so far as they are those things which they are, as the man three cubits tall is; he too is not brought together into one genus, but under one genus and one category. (VI. 1. 5, 22-26)

Here, once again, the basic distinctions between genus and category, Being and becoming come into the open. There is a tendency in Plotinus to associate the term 'genus' with the realm of Being and the term 'category' with the realm of becoming for reasons which he provides in the second tract (VI. 2).

In conclusion, it is fundamental for the understanding of Plotinus' philosophy in general, and his criticism of Aristotle's doctrine of categories in particular, to keep in mind the basic ontological distinction between the two realms of reality, the realm of real Being and the realm of mere becoming. It was precisely this point which later commentators tried to modify and clarify. To Porphyry, for example, it was clear that the two realms of reality should be kept separate and Aristotle's categories should be restricted to the sensible realm. Thus the way was prepared for the reconciliation of the-this-worldly-Aristotelianism and the-otherworldly-Platonism and Plotinianism.

c. Plotinus on Relation

According to the order in which Aristotle discusses the categories, the category of *πρός τι* follows those of substance and quantity, as we saw.⁴³ It is noteworthy that Plotinus gives special consideration to this category which he discusses in four whole chapters, that is, as many as he devoted to both substance and quantity together. Given that this category is one of the five genera which Plotinus finally accepted as sufficient to account for the sensible world, it seems problematic that this category is almost neglected in the third tractate (VI. 3), where he re-examines and clarifies the nature of the other accepted categories of becoming. In the next chapter I will have the opportunity to give a probable explanation for the

⁴¹ *Enneads* VI. 3. 3, 23-25. For Plotinus time is just a "παρακολούθημα κινήσεως".

⁴² This had been considered as the characteristic of quantity in the strict sense in *Categories* 6a 26-27.

⁴³ On this, see Chapter Three above.

discrepancy concerning the treatment of the category of relation in VI. 1. and VI. 3. respectively. Here I will proceed to examine his discussion of this category which is found in chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9 of VI. 1.

By now the procedure which Plotinus follows in his criticism is sufficiently familiar. As would be expected, in his consideration of this category Plotinus inquires "whether there is generic community in it, or whether it comes together in another way into one" (VI. 1. 6, 1-2). Such an inquiry seems to be justified by the fact that Aristotle in the *Categories* as well as the *Metaphysics* speaks of different types of relatives.⁴⁴ If there is not a κοινότης γενική which embraces all the different kinds of relatives, then it will be necessary to look for other grounds to support their unity. But first comes another important question regarding the nature of the relation (σχέσις) which is involved in the various cases of relatives. As Plotinus put it:

And it is particularly important when dealing with this category to ask whether this state of being related has any substantial existence, for instance, the right and the left and the double and the half, or whether it is so in some cases, for instance the one last mentioned, but there is no substantiality in the first mentioned, or whether it is nowhere so. (VI. 1. 6, 3-6)

By raising this question Plotinus touches upon one of the most difficult philosophical problems, i.e. the ontological status of relations.⁴⁵ That relations have some sort of being, that is, that they "are" in some sense is hard to deny. Yet, it is not easy to tell what sort of being they have or what kind of actuality they possess.⁴⁶ For Aristotle, as we have seen, to be a relative thing is categorially different from being a qualified or quantified thing or a substance. Under the category of relation are subsumed such relatives as master and slave, father and son, sense and sensible, knowledge and knowable and the like. In the *Metaphysics* he distinguishes different types of relatives according to whether they imply number (e.g. double and half, equal and unequal) or potency (e.g. active and passive), and whether they pertain to the measurable, knowable or thinkable. Aristotle states the difference between these kinds of relatives as follows:

Relative terms which imply number or potency, therefore, are all relative because their very essence includes in its nature a reference to something

⁴⁴ *Metaphysics* 1020a-1022a.

⁴⁵ In contemporary "categorical schemes," like that which was developed by A. N. Whitehead in *Process and Reality*, the category of "relatedness" is dominant over quality (p. xiii).

⁴⁶ The term ὑπόστασις is used here in the sense of 'existence' or 'actuality' and should not be confused with Plotinus' doctrine of the three Hypostases, One, Intellect, Soul.

else, not because something else involves a reference to it; but that which is measurable or knowable or thinkable is called relative because something else involves a reference to it. For 'that which is thinkable' implies that the thought of it is possible, but the thought is not relative to 'that of which it is the thought;' for we should then have said the same thing twice.⁴⁷ (1021a 27-34)

Plotinus' answer to the question regarding the actuality of relations is that some of them are actual in the sense that they result from a certain activity, while others are not. For example, "Knowledge would indeed have in relation to its object a single active substantial existence, and sense-perception in the same way in relation to its object. . . ." (VI. 1. 6, 13-15). The same may hold true with regard to active and passive, measure and measured and so forth. But, as to other cases of relatives, Plotinus seems to have some reservations. Consider the following:

But what product would like have in relation to like? It is not a question of a product, but of something which is there, of the sameness in the qualified. But there is nothing over and above the qualification in each of the like things. Nor is there in the case of equal things: for the sameness in the quantum is there before the state of being related. But what is the state of being related other than our judgement when we compare things which are what they are by themselves and say "this thing and this thing have the same size and the same quantity," and "this man has produced this man, and this man controls this man?" (*Ibid.* 17-25)

Plotinus continues by pointing out that in the remaining cases of relatives, that is, exceeding, having, right and left, before and after, it is we who make the comparison (*παραβολή*), the juxtaposition (*παράθεσις*), or the judgment (*κρίσις*). That is to say, each of these relations depend on us who thought of it and "there is nothing of it in the things themselves" (*Ibid.* 34-35). Thus, Plotinus concludes:

. . . we should stop enquiring whether the state of relation exists; but we should also note that with some things in this state, as long as the subjects remain as they were, even if they become separated, the state of relation persists, but with others it comes into existence when they come together, and with others again, even when they remain as they are, the state of being related either comes to an end altogether or becomes different, as in the case of right and near, and it is from these particularly that our suspicion arises that in things of this kind relation is nothing. (VI. 1. 7, 16-21)

Having clarified in this way the elusive character of relation, Plotinus realizes that he is digressing from the main task to inquire "what is the same in all [case of relatives] and if it is so as a genus, but not something incidental: then, when we have found what is the same, we must enquire

⁴⁷ Compare this with *Categories* chapter 7.

what kind of existence it has'' (*Ibid.* 22-24). So chapters 8 and 9 are devoted to this search for the common factor or element in all particular cases of relatives. In passing, however, he discussed two points which should not be overlooked. These points are (a) Aristotle's definition of relatives as presented in the *Categories* (6a 36-38), and (b) the simultaneity (ἄμα) of relatives which was considered as one of the special characteristics of this category.⁴⁸

With regard to (a) Plotinus tried to clarify the Aristotelian definition, which as stated may be misleading in the sense that it may suggest that an attribute of a subject is a relation. Plotinus remarks:

We must certainly speak of relation, not if something is simply said to belong to another, a state of soul or body for instance, nor because a soul belongs to this man or is in something different [from itself], but in things where the existence derives from nowhere else but the state of relation: existence here does not mean that of the [related] subjects, but that of the relation. (*Ibid.* 24-27)

As for (b), Plotinus seems to accept that the correlatives arise simultaneously, though he questions whether they also endure simultaneously in all cases. He says in this connection:

But do they remain in existence together? Now in the case of father and son and in similar relations, when the father is gone the son is [still] son, and a brother [is a brother] when his brother is gone: for we say "he is like the dead man."⁴⁹ (*Ibid.* 38-41)

In his attempt to find the "constant element" or the "common reality" to all cases of relatives, Plotinus utilizes the following distinctions: (a) Corporeal and incorporeal, (b) synonymous and homonymous, (c) active and inactive, and (d) producer and product. With regard to (a) Plotinus definitely declares that "the common reality cannot be a body" (VI. 1. 8, 45). Thus, the only alternative is that it be something bodiless, if it exists at all. With regard to (b) he warns that the same reality will not necessarily be implied by the mere use of the term 'related' "for is certainly not just because it is called a state of being related that it would have the same essential character (*Ibid.* 7-8). As to (c) and (d) he states:

Are then the states of being related to be distinguished in this way, in that some things have a relationship observable as inactive, just lying there, so to speak, and it only exists when they are entirely simultaneous, but others, along with their power and operation, are either always disposed to relationship and had their preparedness for it beforehand, and it comes into

⁴⁸ See Chapter Three above.

⁴⁹ It was probably on this ground that the Stoics denied the actuality and reality of relations.

existence in their coming together and actualization, or, in a quite general way, one set of them have produced and the others come to exist, and what has come to exist only gives a name to the other, but the producer gives the existence? For the father and the son are like this: and the active and the passive have a kind of life and actualization.⁵⁰ (VI. 1. 8, 8-14)

This analysis seems to lead to the conclusion that the effort to find a "common reality" in all kinds of relatives must be abandoned. Plotinus sees the difficulty and states it in an aporetic way (*Ibid.* 17-19). However, he does not want to accept this conclusion. So he tries another way as follows:

We must therefore in the cases mentioned earlier, of the producer and of knowledge for instance, posit that the state of being related is active by reason of the activity of the actual agent and the rational forming principle. For, certainly, if realities had to be bodies, it would be necessary to say the states which are said to belong to a relation were nothing; but if we give the principal place to incorporeal things and rational principles, saying that the states of relationship are rational principles [then we should also say that] participations in forms are their causes—for the double itself is [the] cause of [something] being double and [similarly with] the half.⁵¹ (VI. 1. 9, 1-9)

In this passage, Plotinus gives us a hint regarding the importance of relations and their reality. For the Stoics, for instance, it would be difficult to assert the reality of incorporeal relations without endangering the coherence of their philosophical system which was thoroughly materialistic. But for those, like Plotinus, who place the incorporeal higher than the corporeal in the hierarchy of Being, there is nothing disturbing as far as relations and their reality are concerned. One can see that Plotinus here forgot for a moment his criticism of Aristotle and turned towards the realm of Platonic Forms. He does not speak of relatives or correlatives any more but only of relation (σχέσις). He mentions, for example, "the double itself or Doubleness" which is the cause of something being double.

The problem, our initial problem, seems to remain unsolved: Do relations constitute a single genus or not? What sort of unity do they display? As in the cases of οὐσία and ποσόν, Plotinus denies to πρὸς τι the "unity of a genus" and finally puts them under the common head of a category. The reason for this is given in the following passage:

⁵⁰ The example of the father/son relation is to be found not in *Categories* but in *Metaphysics* 1021a 23-24. In the former work we find instead the example master/slave.

⁵¹ This is a difficult passage to translate. The addition of some of the brackets is mine in an attempt to make it more readable.

But even if it was possible to bring back all the relatives we have mentioned into one, it would be impossible to bring into a single genus all the things which are grouped under the same category with them. For they bring back into one the denials of the relative terms and the things which derive their names from them, for instance the double and the double-sized man. How then could one bring under one genus a thing itself and the denial of it, double and not double, and relative and not relative? It is just as if one made a genus "living being" and put the non-living being into it. And the double and the double-sized man are like whiteness and the white man, not at all identical. (VI. 1. 9, 30-39)

There are two points in this passage which should be noticed. Firstly, Plotinus provides us with another way to distinguish "genus" from "category." According to Plotinus, "category" can include negations while "genus" cannot. Secondly, by comparing doubleness and double things with whiteness and white things respectively, and by stating that they cannot be classed together as identical, Plotinus alludes in all probability to the *Categories* where Aristotle speaks of qualities (ποιότητες) and *qualia* (ποιὰ) as constituting one single category, the category of ποιόν. To this category I must turn now in order to discuss Plotinus' specific objections.

d. Plotinus on Quality

It has been seen that in the *Categories* Aristotle distinguishes four types of qualities and refers to quality as "that in virtue of which things are said to be qualified somehow."⁵² As expected, Plotinus raises many objections regarding both these Aristotelian theses. Since he cannot find a common ground on which to base its "generic unity," he concludes that quality, like all the other categories discussed previously, cannot be called a "genus." At best it may be allowed to be called a "category." He explains:

And as for quality, from which what is called the qualified [or quale] derives, one must first grasp what is its real nature which enables it to produce what are called qualified beings, and whether, being one and the same according to what is common [to all kinds of quality], it produces its species by distinctive differences, or, if qualities are to be understood in many different senses there would not be one genus of quality. What, then,

⁵² *Categories* 8b 25-26, "Ποιότητα δὲ λέγω καθ' ἣν ποιοὶ τινες εἶναι λέγονται". For Plato's coining of this term, see *Theaetetus* 182a. In *Categories* Chapter eight, Aristotle recognizes four kinds of quality, which is, thus, a "πλεοναχῶς λεγόμενον":

- (1) ἕξεις καὶ διαθέσεις;
- (2) δύναμις φυσικὴ καὶ ἀδυναμία;
- (3) παθητικαὶ ποιότητες καὶ πάθη;
- (4) σχήματα καὶ μορφαί.

is the common element in state and disposition and passive quality and figure and shape? And what about rarefied and solid and lean? (VI. 1. 10, 1-6)

Searching for this "common element" (τὸ κοινόν), Plotinus proceeds by making tentative proposals. A proposal will have to be modified or abandoned if it leads to impossibilities or absurdities. The first proposal which Plotinus makes in this connection is that δύναμις (potency, power, capacity) may be the "common element" shared by all different kinds of qualities.⁵³ Now, this assumption seems to hold in such cases as habits, dispositions, natural capacities and the like. It is evident, however, that as a common characteristic of qualities it cannot apply to physical incapacities (ἀδυναμίαι), which nevertheless are considered by Aristotle as qualities.⁵⁴ Besides, how is it possible for figures (σχήματα) and shapes (μορφαί) to be considered both as powers and as qualities in the Aristotelian sense? But for Plotinus the most absurd implication of the assumption that qualities are powers is this: If the assumption were true, then only qualified beings would be powerful, while pure Being or Being without qualifications would have to be powerless. That is to say, qualities (δυνάμεις) would seem to be raised above the activities (ἐνέργειαι) of substance which is not acceptable to Plotinus. He states:

And further, being *qua* being will have no power except when the quale comes to it. And the activities of substances, which are activities in the strictest sense, activate what belongs to the quale by themselves, and what they are belongs to their own powers. (VI. 1. 10, 12-15)

Consequently, the original proposal that qualities are powers must be modified somehow. For, Plotinus argues, perhaps qualities are conditioned by powers which are posterior to the substances as such "So that quality would be a power which adds to substance, posterior to their being themselves, the being qualified" (*Ibid.* 20-21). But this posteriority would be enough to prevent qualities from enjoying the unity of a genus, since "genera," for which Plotinus seeks here, are primary.⁵⁵

If this is so, then it will be well to look somewhere else for the "common element" in all types of quality. Plotinus' second proposal is that this "common element" may be "a sort of forming principles" (λόγοι τινές). In order to grasp the importance of this proposal, it is necessary to examine briefly a basic distinction which Plotinus draws between

⁵³ According to SAC, pp. 224ff., the conception of qualities as δυνάμεις was Stoic. For the various meanings of the term, see *Metaphysics* 1019a-1020a.

⁵⁴ Ἀδυναμία is the opposite of δύναμις, that is, the absence of the potency or potentiality of something.

⁵⁵ In VI. 2. 8, 42-43, Plotinus states: "Καὶ πρῶτα δὲ γένη ὅτι οὐδὲν αὐτῶν κατηγορήσεις ἐν τῷ τί ἐστι".

κυρίως ποιότητες and ὁμωνύμως ποιότητες. The latter are also called by Plotinus διαφοραὶ τῆς οὐσίας (essential or specific differences). A parallel of this important distinction is to be found in *Metaphysics* (1020b 13-21), where Aristotle distinguished two kinds of ποιόν, what he calls διαφοραὶ τῆς οὐσίας or τὸ κυριώτατον and what he calls διαφοραὶ κινήσεων or πάθη. I shall quote and compare both related passages here. Aristotle states:

Quality, then, seems to have practically two meanings, and one of these is the more proper. The primary quality is the differentia of the essence and of this the quality of numbers is a part; for it is a difference of essence, but either not of things that move or not of them *qua* moving. Secondly, there are the modifications of things that move, *qua* moving, and the differentiae of movements; virtue and vice fall among these modifications; for they indicate differentiae of the movement or activity, according to which the things in motion act or are acted on well or badly. (Ross' translation)

Plotinus states:

But the specific differences which distinguish substances in relation to each other are qualities in an equivocal sense, being rather activities and rational forming principles, or parts of forming principles, making clear what the thing is none the less even if they seem to declare that the substance is of a specific quality. And the qualities in the strict and proper sense, according to which beings are qualified, which we say are powers, would in fact in their general character be a sort of forming principles and, in a sense, shapes, beauties and uglinesses in the soul and in the body in the same way. (VI. 1. 10, 21-27)

The basic difference between these two approaches, insofar as the twofold division of qualities is concerned, is that, what Aristotle considered as qualities in the strict sense (i.e. the essential differences) are, for Plotinus, qualities only in a secondary sense (i.e. equivocal or homonymous). For unlike the qualities in the true sense, they are not δυνάμεις, Plotinus argues, but ἐνέργειαι and λόγοι. He also asserts that the qualities in the strict sense determine the qualified things by virtue of being powers. But then the question is: "How can they all be powers? Let us grant that beauty and health are, of both kinds, but how can ugliness and illness and feebleness and in general incapacity be powers?" (*Ibid.* 27-30). The following passages may suggest an answer to this question:

Nor, again, are all qualities rational forming principles: for how can illness, a permanent state of illness, be a forming principle? But then, are those which consist in forms and powers qualities, but these other ones privations? So they are not one genus, but they are brought into one category, as for instance knowledge is a form of power, but ignorance is a privation and incapacity. (*Ibid.* 37-43)

And again:

And how is the forming principle in illness? Here too we must speak about a disturbed forming principle, that of health. Or perhaps all are not contained in rational forming principle, but the sufficient common element [of quality] is, besides being disposed in a particular way, being outside substance, and the quality of the substrate is what comes upon it posterior to the substance. (*Ibid.* 63-66)

The implication of these considerations is that, although it is not easy to determine the "common element" in virtue of which all types of quality will constitute one single genus, the unity of a category may be considered as comprising all *qualia* (qualified substances). Having examined Plotinus' criticism of the other three cardinal Aristotelian categories, this conclusion is in full accord with his stated position.

Plotinus then proceeds to question the distinction between *εἶς* and *διάθεσις* which Aristotle considered as a type of quality and referred to as "permanent" and "nonpermanent" qualities respectively. Plotinus remarks that permanence and its opposite cannot function as *differentiae* of quality (VI. 1. 11, 1-7). He also doubts whether physical capacities (another kind of qualities, for Aristotle) can be considered as qualities in the same sense as acquired abilities or skills are (*Ibid.* 8-15). In general, the whole chapter (chapter 11) is a series of critical remarks and objections to whatever Aristotle has asserted regarding the different kinds of qualities. He goes as far as to accept as qualities what Aristotle had left out of his list. Plotinus asks:

And would not the rough and the smooth and the rare and the dense be correctly called *qualia*? For it is certainly not by the distances [of the parts] from each other or their nearness that something is subtle or dense or there is roughness, and it is not everywhere the result of the irregularity or regularity of the position [of the parts]: and even if these were their origins, nothing prevents them even so from being *qualia*.⁵⁶ (VI. 1. 11, 24-29)

The details of the Plotinian criticism on this point need not concern us here. It will suffice to observe the sharply critical spirit of Plotinus towards the positions which Aristotle had adopted in stating the doctrine of categories. Such an attitude contrasts with Porphyry's approach which we have considered.⁵⁷ Reading through the first tract of the sixth *Ennead* one may get the impression that Plotinus was willing to question point by point all assertions made by Aristotle in his categorial theory. But it

⁵⁶ For Aristotle, *Categories* 10a 16-24, 'rough' and 'smooth' denote rather "a certain position of the parts" so that they are "foreign to the classification of qualities."

⁵⁷ It is puzzling that Porphyry who has the tendency to comment favorably on Aristotle's categories never mentions Plotinus' many objections at least in the extant *Commentary*.

would be unfair to say that Plotinus was always negative. At times he proposed alternative solutions to the problems which Aristotle discussed. For instance, in his criticism of the fourfold division of quality he first objects to the Aristotelian distinctions and then he tries to answer the question: "But if one does not think it proper to divide the quale in this way, in what way could one divide it?" (VI. 1. 12, 1-2).

Plotinus' proposal provides for a distinction between those qualities which pertain to the body and those which pertain to the soul. There are also subdivisions of each kind in accordance with the sense organ or the psychic faculty which is involved in each type of quality. All these proposals, however, constitute a distinct Plotinian doctrine the merit of which cannot be examined and assessed here. I should like to mention only one point of importance before I close the discussion of this category.

As we have seen, Aristotle gathered both the different kinds of qualities as well as the things qualified and paronymously called after them in one and the same category, ποιόν. In reference to this treatment Plotinus remarks: "But we must consider also how the qualified by the quality is in the same category [as the quality]: for there is certainly not one genus for both" (*Ibid.* 13-15). For Plotinus, it is inconceivable that one can bring under the same head the qualified sensible so-called substances, the sensible qualities and Quality *per se*, that is, an entity of the intelligible realm. Even the qualified sensible so-called substance would seem to belong to two different categories, substance and quality. Thus once again the problem whether or not one and the same entity can be placed in two different categories is to be faced. As we saw, Aristotle's position on this issue was that it is possible to classify one thing in two categories provided that each time we consider a different aspect of the item under consideration.⁵⁸ Accordingly, a colored object, for example, *qua* object belongs to the category of substance, though *qua* colored, i.e. qualified in a certain way, it belongs to the category of quality, more precisely to *qualia*.

But Aristotle was concerned with this sensible world, while for all genuine Platonists beyond the sensible realm (κόσμος αἰσθητός) which is quasi-real, there is the intelligible realm (κόσμος νοητός) which is really real. The relation between these two realms had been somehow problematic since Plato's time. In this respect it is understandable that Plotinus found it necessary to emphasize the following point in closing this discussion:

⁵⁸ *Categories* 11a 20-38.

But one must enquire here also if the qualities here and those in the intelligible world come under one genus: this is directed to those who posit qualities in the intelligible world as well: or even if someone does not grant that there are Forms, all the same when he speaks of intelligence, if he is speaking of a state, he certainly [implies that there is] something common to the state in the intelligible world and this one here: and it is agreed that there is wisdom. Now if the term "wisdom" is used of it equivocally in relation to the wisdom here below, it is clearly not counted among the things of this world: but if it is used univocally then the quality will be common to both worlds, unless someone says that all the things in the intelligible world belong to the category of substance: in which case being intelligent will be substance there too. But this is a general question about the other categories as well, whether there are two genera here and there, or whether both fall under one. (VI. 1. 12, 45-54)

It seems, then, that for Plotinus homonymy is involved in this category as was the case with the other previously discussed categories. How to keep together and in harmony the two spheres, the sphere of real Being and the sphere of mere becoming, and how to discourse about them meaningfully was a real problem for any pure Platonist, like Plotinus.

e. The Other Six Categories

The four cardinal categories in the Aristotelian list, with which we have dealt thus far, will be reconsidered by Plotinus in the third tract of the sixth *Ennead*. With some important qualifications and with the additional non-Aristotelian category of *κίνησις* they will be finally accepted by Plotinus as the set of categories which adequately accounts for the realm of becoming and numerically corresponds to the set of five highest genera of the realm of Being. As to the remaining six categories in Aristotle's list, it must be said that (1) they are severely criticized and rejected here in the first tract on the ground that they, like the others, are not authentic "genera;" and (2) they are not reconsidered in the third tract because they are viewed by Plotinus as reducible to other basic categories, as we shall see in the next chapter. To the treatment of each of them Plotinus devotes a short chapter except for the pair of action and passion. These two are treated extensively because Plotinus tries to show that they can be subsumed under the new "genus" of *κίνησις*.

In this connection it should be mentioned that Porphyry's extant *Commentary* on the *Categories* had little to say with regard to these six last categories.⁵⁹ Even Aristotle did not discuss these categories as extensively

⁵⁹ See the discussion of Chapter Three above.

as the others.⁶⁰ We cannot assume that the relevant part of the *Categories* is missing, as is the case regarding Porphyry's *Commentary*.⁶¹

In the following sections I will consider briefly the grounds for Plotinus' criticism and rejection of these six categories. I will take them by pairs as follows:

- (1) when and where (ποτέ καὶ πού);
- (2) acting and being affected (ποιεῖν καὶ πάσχειν);
- (3) having and being positioned (ἔχειν καὶ κεῖσθαι).

(1) Plotinus on when and where

With regard to Aristotle's category of ποτέ Plotinus remarks:

If the "yesterday" and "to-morrow" and "last year" and such are parts of time, why are not these also in the same genus in which time is? Since it is surely right that the "was" and the "is" and the "will be," being parts of time, should be classed in the same genus in which time is. But time is said to belong to the quantum: so what need is there of another category? (VI. 1. 13, 1-6)

Anticipating the possible objection that "yesterday" and "last year" are not merely time but specified and definite time, a "time-when," Plotinus replies:

. . . first of all, if it is "some time" it will be time: then, if the "yesterday" is time past, it will be something composite, if past is one thing and time is another: two categories, then, and not something single and simple. (*Ibid.* 9-13)

The same holds true, for Plotinus, in those cases in which ποτέ is defined not as time but as "that which is in time" (*Ibid.* 13-14). For, if time is in the category of quantity, it is evident that a definite time, such as that which is denoted by "yesterday" or "last year," must also be a quantity, in this case a definite quantity. His last remark on the category of when may be considered as a transition to the category of where. It reads as follows:

But if, whenever they say, "yesterday," we take this to mean this particular thing happened in a past definite time, they are mentioning still more and more things: then, if one must introduce other categories by putting one

⁶⁰ As we have said, Aristotle was not compulsive about the enumeration of the categories. The tenfold list is found only in the *Categories* and *Topics*.

⁶¹ For the later commentators the last six categories is the outcome of combining οὐσία and each of the three categories which follow it, ποσόν, ποιόν, πρὸς τι. In EAC, pp. 339-341, we find the following scheme:

οὐσία plus ποσόν gives πού, ποτέ;

οὐσία plus ποιόν gives ποιεῖν, πάσχειν;

οὐσία plus πρὸς τι gives κεῖσθαι, ἔχειν. See also Ross [276], p. lxxxvi.

thing in another, as in this case what is in time, we shall discover many others from putting one thing in another. But this will be explained more clearly in the next discussion about the "where." (*Ibid.* 29-33)

Criticizing Aristotle's category of where, Plotinus argues in the following way, to summarize and paraphrase his argument: (1) Expressions like "in Athens," "in the Lyceum" and so forth are similar to expressions like "above," "below," "in the middle" etc., though they are more determined. (2) "Above," "below" and the like, as parts of place (τόπος), are places themselves. Therefore, (3) "in Academy," and "in Athens" may also be considered as places, in which case they belong to the same category as place. If so, then there is no need of a separate category of where. The conclusion is that this category is also reducible.⁶²

Sometimes Plotinus' argument seems trivial, as, for instance, when he claims that "Then, if this 'in Athens' means 'is in Athens,' the 'is' category is added to that of place: but it ought not to be added: just as one does not say 'quality is,' but only 'quality'" (VI. 1. 14, 16-18). At other times, however, his criticism is sound and sharp, as when he asks:

And, over and above all this: if what is in time is something else besides time and what is in place is something else besides place, why will not what is in a pot make another category, and why is not what is in matter something else, and what is in a substrate something else, and the part in the whole and the whole in the parts, and the genus in the species and the species in the genus? And so we shall have more categories.⁶³ (VI. 1. 14, 19-24)

It is difficult to tell what Aristotle's answer to such negative criticism would be. But, if Plotinus' reasoning and criticism are correct, it would seem to follow that both categories discussed here can be reduced to χρόνος and τόπος respectively, that is, ultimately to the category of quantity.⁶⁴ Porphyry, who discussed these two categories as independent from continuous quantities, evidently did not follow Plotinus on this issue. The same can be said about the rest of the categories which he accepted as necessary, though it is not easy to tell on what grounds he supported his position, since sufficient evidence is lacking due to the fragmentary state of his *Commentary*.⁶⁵

⁶² That is to say, the category of πού is reducible to τόπος which, for Aristotle, was a type of continuous quantity, while Plotinus considered it as relational (VI. 3. 3).

⁶³ For the meaning of the expression ἐν τινι, see *Categories* 1a 22-24.

⁶⁴ Both τόπος and χρόνος are quantities for Aristotle. *Categories* 4b 22-5a 14, *Metaphysics* 1020a 7-32, *Physics* 208a and 218bff.

⁶⁵ However, we should keep in mind that his systematic commentary is lost, while his extant commentary is preserved in incomplete form and, at any rate, it is elementary.

(2) Plotinus on acting and being affected

Eight whole chapters (15 to 22) of the present tract are devoted to the discussion of the two Aristotelian categories, ποιεῖν and πάσχειν, which Aristotle passed over in the *Categories*. The reason for this special treatment is that Plotinus does not want simply to reject the categories of action and passion on the ground that they do not constitute authentic "genera of Being." Nor does he believe that these two categories are unnecessary in the sense that they are reducible to other more fundamental Aristotelian categories, as was the case regarding when and where. Rather, it is because he introduces a new category which, he thinks, can substitute for these two categories, that he gives such disproportionate space to the treatment of this pair of categories. Κίνησις (motion, movement) is the new category. Κίνησις is to be found in the list of the "primary genera" of the intelligible realm and in the list of the categories of the sensible world. Of all Aristotelian categories only οὐσία has been given such a privileged position. For substance, like motion, is both a genus with regard to the upper level of Being and a category or "pseudo-genus" with regard to the lower level of becoming, though the term is used not synonymously but homonymously as Plotinus never forgets to emphasize in order to avoid misunderstandings.⁶⁶ In the next chapter I will consider the fundamental role which κίνησις plays in Plotinus' philosophy in its relation to both δύναμις (potency, potentiality) and ἐνέργεια (act, actuality). In this section it would be pertinent to examine closely Plotinus' criticism of the two categories, ποιεῖν and πάσχειν, and the presuppositions of his criticism.

To begin with, Plotinus' first observation in this connection is that acting or action, like quantity and quality, is regarded by Aristotle as "another genus" on the ground that it is an attribute of substance. Now, if this is the case, then Plotinus cannot see why motion, which is also an accompaniment of substance, should not constitute "another genus." He argues as follows:

But in what is called "acting" [or doing and making] these are the points which one would enquire into. For it is said that, since after substance there were the accompaniments of substance, quantity and number, the quantum was another genus, and because quality accompanies substance the quale was another genus; so, since there is activity, acting is another genus. . . . For why is quality one single accompaniment of substance, and quantity one, and the relative one because of the state of relatedness of one thing to another, but, when movement is an accompaniment of substance, will movement also not be a single genus? (VI. 1. 15, 1-16)

⁶⁶ On synonymy and homonymy, see Chapter Two above.

Accordingly, it would seem that *κίνησις*, which Aristotle defined as *ἀτελής ἐνέργεια* (incomplete or imperfect act), is here elevated by Plotinus above *ἐνέργεια* or, at least, it is put on the same level. On this basis Plotinus attempts a criticism of Aristotle's conception of *κίνησις* in the next three chapters (16 to 18). It should be noted, however, that *κίνησις* was restricted by Aristotle to the sensible world of physical existents and had many names depending on the particular category to which it was referred. Thus, it may be called generation, corruption, alteration, augmentatation, diminution, and locomotion as the case may be.

However, in Plotinus' philosophy *κίνησις* is considered (1) as a category of mere becoming; (2) as a genus of real Being; and (3) as complete as *ἐνέργεια* in at least one sense.⁶⁷ Small wonder, then, if the issue of the nature of *κίνησις* and its categorial status became very controversial for later commentators. For example, Iamblichus defended Aristotle's position and advanced a major criticism against Plotinus' doctrine of motion. In his arguments Iamblichus goes so far as to accuse Plotinus of following the Stoics on this issue. A summary of these arguments has been preserved in Simplicius.⁶⁸

In what follows, I will try to summarize Plotinus' criticism of Aristotle's notion of motion. Every effort will be made to present his arguments as clearly as possible, though they admittedly are difficult and complicated. A detailed analysis would perhaps be inappropriate, since Aristotle did not consider *κίνησις* as one of his categories, though it is part of the *post-praedicamenta*. I will begin with certain objections which, Plotinus thinks, can be raised against his own proposal that *κίνησις* as a category can substitute for Aristotle's *ποιεῖν* and *πάσχειν*.

First of all, Plotinus is aware that one may object to his proposal of elevating *κίνησις* to the state of a genus because such a move would seem to contradict Aristotle's conception of it as *ἀτελής ἐνέργεια*. If so, Plotinus is ready to accept *ἐνέργεια* as the "genus" and *κίνησις* as its "species." The specific difference, in this case, will be "incomplete" (*ἀτελής*). But this "incompleteness," Plotinus warns, should not be misunderstood as implying that *κίνησις* lacks actuality. On the contrary, *κίνησις* is actual, but it differs from *ἐνέργεια* in the following ways:

But if someone were to say that movement was an incomplete active actuality, nothing would prevent us from giving active actuality the priority and subordinating movement to it as a species as being incomplete, making its category active actuality, but adding the "incomplete." For the "incomplete" is said about it, not because it is not also active actuality, but

⁶⁷ The kind of *κίνησις*, which is as complete as *ἐνέργεια*, Plotinus calls "*ἀπλή κίνησις*" (VI. 1. 16, 17).

⁶⁸ SAC, pp. 301-310.

it is altogether active actuality, but has also the "over and over again," not that it may arrive at active actuality—it is that already—but it may do something, which is another thing subsequent to itself. And then [when it does do it] it is not itself brought to completion, but the business which was its object: walking, for instance, was walking from the beginning. But if one had to complete a lap, and had not yet arrived at the point of having completed it, what was lacking would not belong to walking or movement, but to walking a certain distance: but it was already walking, however short the walk was, and movement: for certainly the man who is in motion has already moved, and the man who is cutting, cut already. And just as what is called active actuality does not need time, so neither does movement, but [only] movement to a certain extent: and if active actuality is in timelessness, so is movement in that it is in a general way movement.⁶⁹ (VI. 1. 16, 1-17)

The distinction between ἐνέργεια, which is characterized by "timelessness," and κίνησις, which is supposedly "in time," is Peripatetic in its origin.⁷⁰ Plotinus introduced it here as a possible objection to his proposal that κίνησις should be considered as a "genus" on the same basis as the other Aristotelian so-called "genera." Initially, Plotinus seems to accept this distinction. But by distinguishing between κίνησις as such and κίνησις which is "quantitatively determined" (τοσόνδε), he is able to argue that only the latter requires time for its completion, while the former, like ἐνέργεια, requires no time (ἄχρονος). "Therefore," he concludes, "just as active actuality is in timelessness, so nothing prevents movement from originating in timelessness, but time has come by its becoming of a certain length" (*Ibid.* 31-33).

Plotinus' thesis, that κίνησις "pure and simple," to use MacKenna's expression, is achronic and non-temporal, is manifestly contrary to Aristotle's doctrine. According to the latter, time and motion are so closely connected that "Not only do we measure the movement by the time, but also the time by movement, because they define each other."⁷¹ And again, "Since time is continuous, movement must be continuous, in as much as there can be no time without movement."⁷² Plotinus seems to refer to this close connection between time and movement when he draws attention to the following absurdity (ἀλογία) which results from such a connection:

There is evidence for this in the stupid statement which says that it is always possible to take a piece of any movement whatsoever, and there is no beginning of the time in which and from which it began, nor a beginning of the

⁶⁹ *Physics* 201a 11.

⁷⁰ SAC, pp. 308ff.

⁷¹ *Physics* 220b 25.

⁷² *Ibid.* 219a 1.

movement itself, but it is always possible to divide it up and back: so that it would result that the movement which has just begun has been in motion from infinite time, and that movement is infinite in respect to its beginning. This results because of separating of active actuality from movement and asserting that active actuality occurs in timelessness, but saying that movement needs time, not movement of a certain length only; but they are compelled to say that its nature is quantitative; and yet they admit that the quantum is incidentally present to it, if it is a day long or of any time you like. (VI. 1. 16, 19-31)

Plotinus' view, then, is that just as ἐνέργεια is not in time, so is κίνησις as such, but not as a measured movement. Evidently this view dissociates motion from time, so that we can speak of it as taking place "all at once," at least in the sense in which μεταβολή (change) is said to take place "all at once."⁷³ If the Aristotelian view about instantaneous change is correct, and if μεταβολή is identified with κίνησις,⁷⁴ then Plotinus can argue in the following way:

Since changes also are admitted to take place in timelessness, in the remark "as if there was not a change which takes place all at once;" if then change, why not also motion? But change has here been taken, not in the sense of completed change: for there was no need to change in completion of the process of change. (*Ibid.* 33-37)

There is another possible objection to Plotinus' proposal that motion should be considered as a "genus" which is capable of substituting for the two Aristotelian genera, action and passion. This objection may be formulated as follows: Instead of postulating a distinct genus, why not treat both motion and act (or active actuality as Armstrong renders ἐνέργεια) as a case of relatives? Plotinus is aware that Aristotle speaks of κίνησις and ποίησις as pertaining respectively to that "which is potentially motive"⁷⁵ and to that "which is potentially active."⁷⁶ Now, for Aristotle "that which is capable of acting" and "that which is capable of moving" are both cases of relatives, like the knowable and the perceptible.⁷⁷ If so, then the implication would seem to be that motion and action, like knowledge and perception, should be included in the previously discussed category of relation and, therefore, there is no need for a new category. To this possible objection Plotinus replies as follows:

But if someone were to say that neither active actuality nor movement need a genus in and by themselves, but they are to be referred to the relative in that active actuality belongs to that which is potentially active and actual,

⁷³ *Ibid.* 136a 15-18.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* 218b 20.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 202a 23.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* 201a 11.

⁷⁷ *Metaphysics* 1021a 27-34.

and movement to that which is potentially moving or moved, one must answer that it is the very state of relatedness which produces relatives, and they are not produced by the mere statement that a thing is related to another. But when there is some substantial reality, even if it belongs to something else or is related to something else, it certainly possesses its nature prior to the relativity. This active actuality, then, and movement, and state, though belonging to another do not lose their priority to the relative and being thought in and by themselves: otherwise in this way everything will be relative: for absolutely everything has a relation to something, as in the case of the soul. (VI. 1. 17, 1-11)

Plotinus is correct in his assertion that not all types of relations can produce relatives in the technical Aristotelian sense of *πρός τι*. For "in this way everything will be relative" which evidently is not the case. Aristotle's stipulative definition of relatives applies only to a few well specified cases of relatives, as we saw in our discussion of this category. Plotinus' argument continues thus:

But if they are going to refer activity to the relative, but make one genus of acting, why will they not refer movement to the relative, but posit being in motion as one genus, and divide being in motion, as one genus into two, into the species of acting and being acted upon, instead of, as they do now, saying acting is one genus and being acted upon another? (*Ibid.* 14-19)

What Plotinus wants to convey here is that the above objection, that is, that motion belongs to the category of relatives, can be equally applied to Aristotle's category of acting. In other words, if from the fact that there are activities and passions in this world Aristotle is able to derive the categories of *ποιεῖν* and *πάσχειν*, then it would be possible to derive the category of *κινεῖσθαι* from the fact that there is motion in this world too. Why, then, do we not consider the latter as a genus with the other two as its species, so that one category may do the work assigned to the two of them? Arguing in this way in favor of the newly issued category, Plotinus suggests that the two Aristotelian categories may be subsumed under it without loss. He concludes: "So that both are to be called movements, and movement is one thing and one genus, as we observe besides the quantum in the substance the quale as well, and a movement which appertains to the substance" (VI. 1. 19, 5-8).

Plotinus deals briefly with the questions which refer to Aristotelian distinctions: (1) Does the category of acting cover both *κινήσεις* and *ἐνέργειαι* with the qualification that the latter occur "all at once," while the former take time? (2) Do all activities entail passivity (e.g. cutting, burning etc.) or are some of them independent (e.g. walking, talking etc.)? (3) Can independent activities (*ἀπόλυτοι*) be clearly identified with *ἐνέργειαι* and activities related to passions with *κινήσεις*? (4) How is the

activity of thinking (νοεῖν) to be classified? He concludes with the suggestion of other possible divisions:

And, if you like, some movements are of body and some of soul, or some are self-originated and others are produced in the moving things by the agency of others, or some come from themselves and some from others, and the ones which come from themselves are activities, whether they are directed to other things or independent, but those which come from others are passivities.⁷⁸ (VI. 1. 19, 8-12)

The remainder of Plotinus' discussion supports the thesis that the two categories, acting and acted upon, are simply two sides of one and the same coin. That is to say, the same motion appears as acting, according to Plotinus, when considered from the viewpoint of the acting subject, and appears as passion, when considered from the viewpoint of the subject which is acted upon. Consider, for example, the activity of cutting. To the cutter, this activity will be perceived as an action which he performs. For the object, on the other hand, it will be a passion felt. For, as Plotinus put it, "cutting, the cutting which comes from the cutter and the cutting which takes place in what is being cut, is one, but cutting and being cut are different" (VI 1. 19, 15-18). The difference, which is made clear by "pain" in those cases in which it occurs, is simply a matter of "viewing" the one motion from different vantage points. Thus, "It is a doing in that it comes from one thing and a being affected because it acts on another, being the same movement" (VI. 1. 20, 13-14). And again:

So the same is action in one relationship and passive affection in another. It is the same motion, but looked at on one side it will be action, but on the other passive affection. Because this is disposed in this way; so it seems likely that both are relation, in all cases where action is related to passive affection; if one looks at the same on one side it is action, but if on the other, it is affection. And each of the two is looked at not by itself, but [one] along with that which acts, and [the other] with that which is affected. (VI. 1. 22, 10-17)

Accordingly, the duality of "acting and being acted upon" must be abandoned. For Plotinus, they are two aspects of the same activity. But even if this thesis be accepted, it will explain only those cases of motion in which activity is directed from something to something, that is, when it implies passivity. Evidently, it cannot account for cases in which activity does not imply passivity, as later commentators have remarked.⁷⁹ The possibility of having an activity which does not imply necessarily a subject acted upon, was considered as a justification of Aristotle's thesis

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* 1019a 15-22

⁷⁹ E.g. in SAC, p. 306, 18-19, we read "ἀρχὴ κινήσεως ἀκίνητος".

for having two separate categories, action and passion, by those philosophers who defended the Aristotelian categorial doctrine as complete without Platonic modifications.⁸⁰

(3) Plotinus on having and position

It remains for us to consider the last pair of categories, ἔχειν and κεῖσθαι (having and position, in Armstrong's rendering). Plotinus is very brief in his criticism of these two categories which he rejects as unnecessary. Thus in a short chapter (chapter 23) he considers and questions the grounds on which "having" is regarded as a "genus." His objections on this issue are as follows. First of all, given that the term ἔχειν has many meanings, as Aristotle's analysis of it in the *post-paedicamenta* has made clear, Plotinus raises the question "why will they not refer all the ways of having to this category" (VI. 1. 23, 1-2).⁸¹ Second, even if it be accepted that by having only the possession of things, such as shoes and weapons, will be understood, the question may be raised as to "Why the person who *has* these things makes one category, but, if he burns them or cuts them or buries them or throws them out, does not make another or others" (*Ibid.* 7-9). As a third objection the following remarks can be considered:

If then one must not say that one has a quality, because quality has been mentioned already, or that one has quantity, because quantity has been mentioned, or that one has parts, because substance has been mentioned, then why should one say one has weapons, when substance has been mentioned and they are in this category? (*Ibid.* 11-17)

Fourth, given that Aristotle's categories deal with entities which are "simple" (ἀπλᾶ),⁸² Plotinus queries how it is possible to consider "this man here has weapons on" as a simple entity belonging to one category? Then, can one say this only about a living man, or also if it is a statue which has the weapons? "For each of the two appears to "have" them in a different way, and perhaps "have" is equivocal. (*Ibid.* 20-22)

Accordingly, the category of ἔχειν is superfluous for Plotinus, because (1) it is reducible to the categories of substance and relatives; and (2) it is applicable only to a few cases, so that it cannot function as a "generic category."⁸³

⁸⁰ PAC, p. 141, and SAC, p. 302.

⁸¹ For the multivocity of ἔχειν, see *Categories*, Chapter 15, and *Metaphysics* 1023a 8-25.

⁸² Expressions such as ἀπλᾶ ὄντα, ἀπλᾶ νοήματα, ἀπλᾶ φωναί are common in all commentaries on the *Categories* and point to Aristotle's "ἄνευ συμπλοκῆς λεγόμενα".

⁸³ In view of Plotinus' position on the difference between the terms γένος and κατηγορία, his use of the expression γενική κατηγορία is curious.

These last critical remarks seem to apply also to the category of *κεῖσθαι*, with regard to which Plotinus has some more objections. He understands and interprets this category as having the meaning of "being in a certain position." If so, then it is clear to Plotinus, that there are at least two things involved here, substance and place. But Plotinus cannot see "what need is there to join two categories into one?" (VI. 1. 24, 6). Moreover, he remarks that "if 'sits' signifies an activity, it must be ranked among activities, but if a passive affection, it must be placed in the class of having been or being affected" (*Ibid.* 7-8). In any case the result would be the same: This category is reducible to another.⁸⁴

With the discussion of *κεῖσθαι*, the last category on Aristotle's list, Plotinus' criticism of the Peripatetic tenfold division of "genera" ends and the criticism of the Stoic fourfold division begins. I will consider Plotinus' discussion of the Stoic categories very briefly, without following Plotinus' arguments in any detail.⁸⁵

4. *The Fourfold Division of ὄντα*

It may be stated from the outset that in general Plotinus' criticism of the Stoic doctrine of categories is based on the same grounds as his criticism of the Aristotelian theory. It seems that, in Plotinus' view, the Stoics have repeated all the errors which the Peripatetics committed regarding the problem of the "genera of Being." What is even worse, the Stoics added two more mistakes to the Peripatetic stock. For (1) they included every entity in a single "common genus," the famous τί, (which literally means "something"); and (2) they identified it with ὕλη (matter). Thus they appeared to be both monists and materialists, which is definitely an unpleasant combination to the eyes of a pure Platonist, like Plotinus.

The following passages may serve as an indication of Plotinus' attitude towards the Stoic philosophy in general, and their categorial doctrine in particular:

But as for those who posit the four genera and make a fourfold division into subjects and qualia and things in a certain state and things in a certain state in relation to others, and posit over them a common something and include all things in one genus, there is much that one could say against them because they assume a common something and one genus over all.⁸⁶ (VI. 1. 25, 1-5)

⁸⁴ See also PAC, pp. 141-142.

⁸⁵ The Stoic categorial scheme has been recently discussed by Graeser [123], Chapter Four, which is characteristically titled "Plotinus and the Stoic Categories of Being," with relevant bibliography.

⁸⁶ As given by Plotinus the names of the Stoic categories are: ὑποκείμενα, ποιὰ, πῶς ἔχοντα, πρὸς τί πῶς ἔχοντα.

Again:

They rank subjects first and at this point rank matter before the others, and so rank what they think is the first principle along with the things which come after their first principle. (*Ibid.* 12-14)

And again:

But, though there are many things which are said against this hypothesis, we must stop here for fear that it may be absurd to strive for victory with so manifest an absurdity by showing that they give non-being the first rank as that which is most of all being and so rank the last first. The cause of this is that sense-perception became their guide and they trusted it for the placing of principles and the rest. For they considered that bodies were the real beings. . . . (VI. 1. 28, 1-7)

In spite of all these negative remarks there is one point of importance which should not be overlooked. Plotinus seems to treat both the Aristotelian set of categories and the Stoic categories or *ὑποκείμενα*, as he calls them in the same manner. Now, with regard to so-called Stoic categories, the available evidence seems to support the view that, although they function well ontologically (in Stoic ontology, to be sure), they do not seem to play any significant role logically (in Stoic logic, of course).⁸⁷ If this view is correct, then the fact that Plotinus treats both sets of categories in the same manner would seem to suggest that he accepted the ontological interpretation of Aristotle's categorial doctrine. That this was the case we have the additional testimony of Simplicius.⁸⁸

But, it may be asked, why is this point considered important? In reply, the following reasons may be provided. First of all, Plotinus' acceptance of the ontological interpretation of the categories (Stoic and Aristotelian) sharply contrasts with Porphyry's rejection of it. Thus the two philosophers appear to disagree radically, at least on the issue of the correct interpretation of Aristotle's categorial doctrine. Yet, the generally accepted view is that Porphyry was nothing more than "le disciple et l'éditeur de Plotin."

Secondly, it certainly throws some new light on the presuppositions which underlay Plotinus' severe criticism of Aristotle's doctrine of the categories, to know that he interpreted the categories as "genera of Being," that is, ontologically. In this perspective, it is not difficult to see that the Aristotelian doctrine could not be accepted by Plotinus, whose theory of the three *ὑποστάσεις* and the doctrine of the two realms of being (the realm of real Being and the realm of mere becoming) seem to go beyond this sensible world to which Aristotle's categories were restricted.

⁸⁷ On this, see B. Mates [200], p. 18, and Ressor [583].

⁸⁸ SAC, pp. 1-2.

Thirdly, it indicates the lines along which Porphyry was going to move in order to be able to find a way to incorporate Aristotle's theory of categories in the Neoplatonic version of the Platonic tradition. If nothing else, at least he had to abandon the ontological interpretation of the categories.

5. Conclusion

It was my intent in the present chapter to examine Plotinus' criticism of Aristotle's categories considered as "genera of Being." The preceding discussion has shown that:

(1) Four of the ten categories, that is, when, where, having and position, were criticized and rejected as superfluous. It was argued that they could be reduced to other categories, such as substance, quantity, quality, and relation.

(2) Two other Aristotelian categories, that is, acting and being acted upon, were replaced by a new category which Plotinus introduced. The name of the new category was *κίνησις*, which for Aristotle was something to be found in more than one category, that is, an inter-categorical term.

(3) With regard to the other four basic and more important categories, substance, quantity, quality and relatives, Plotinus' criticism intended to show that they cannot be called "genera," since they lack that "unity" which "genus" implies Platonically. It is at this last point where the core of his criticism is to be found.

There are two underlying presuppositions which must be grasped in order for the Plotinian endeavor to be appreciated. First, it must be clearly understood that Plotinus in this tract criticized the categories as "genera of Being," that is to say, as rivals of Plato's *summa genera*, identified in the Plotinian ontology with the supreme *κόσμος νοητός*. Secondly, according to Plotinus, there are two separate spheres of being: (a) The sphere of real Being, that is, the intelligible realm of the second hypostasis or *Νοῦς*, and (b) the sphere of mere becoming, that is, the sensible realm of *Φύσις*. These two realms resemble each other in a way similar to that of a reflection resembling the reflected object. Because there is a tendency to use the same terms in our discourse with references to these two realms, Plotinus thinks that homonymy, ambiguity and confusion are inevitable. We ought to distinguish between the really real *ὄντα* and their *εἰδωλα*.⁸⁹

It is in this light that Plotinus' criticism of Aristotle's categories must be seen. Plotinus refused to accept the Peripatetic categories as "genera

⁸⁹ On this glaring homonymy is based what modern scholars refer to as Plotinian and Neoplatonic "nominalism." See note 28 above.

of Being'' because, for him, Being is something different from the sensible world of becoming for which Aristotle's theory of categories was tailored. He may allow them to be called "categories" but never genera and, *a fortiori*, never "genera of Being." His position will be understood better once we see what he considers as authentic "genera of Being." The first section of the next chapter is devoted to this aspect of his ontology.

CHAPTER FIVE

PLOTINUS' REDUCTION OF ARISTOTLE'S *CATEGORIES*

In VI. 1., as we saw, Plotinus criticized and rejected both the Peripatetic and the Stoic sets of categories on the ground that neither of them was qualified to account adequately for the realities of the intelligible world. These two sets of categories refer exclusively to the realm of mere becoming which is, to use Plotinus' favorite metaphor, "like the reflection in the mirror, depending upon the original which stands outside of it".¹ It would be mistaken, in Plotinus' view, to call them "genera of Being," for the following reason:

For it is absurd to put being under one genus with nonbeing, as if one were to put Socrates and his portrait under one genus. For "making a distinction" here means marking off and setting apart, and saying that what seems to be being is not being, and by this Plato indicates to them that what is truly being is something else.² (VI. 2. 1, 23-28)

Accordingly, it is in the realm of true Being that one ought to look for the "genera of Being" as Plotinus understood them. In such a lofty search Plato is the only proper guide. It is not surprising that in Plato's theory of μέγιστα γένη,³ Plotinus found the solution to the problem of the nature and number of the "genera of Being." The entire second tract of the sixth *Ennead* is devoted to the presentation and defense of this thesis. Consider its opening:

Now that our enquiry about what are called the ten genera has been completed, and we have spoken about those who bring all things into one genus and posit four species of a sort under the one, the next thing would be to say how these things look to us, trying to lead back our own thoughts to the thought of Plato. . . . Since, then, we are enquiring about being or beings, we must in our discussion first of all make a distinction between what we call being, about which at present our investigation would be correctly conducted, and what others think is being, but we call it becoming, and say that it is never really real. (*Ibid.* 1-22)

¹ VI. 2. 22, 33-35. The picture which Plotinus has in mind here is that of a κάτοπτρον (mirror) placed between the ἀρχέτυπον (original object) and the εἰδῶλον (reflection, image) which it casts into the mirror from ἔξω (outside).

² The next section of this chapter is devoted to the relation of the two realms of being as Plotinus sees it.

³ *Sophist*, especially 254a-255c

In VI. 3., Plotinus will have occasion to consider the realm of becoming which is "the universe perceived by the senses" (*Ibid.* 30-33). But he will also make it clear that "Therefore, we must look for more genera, and different ones in this All from those in the intelligible, since this All is different from that and it is not called the All in the same sense but in a different one, and is an image" (VI. 3. 1, 19-20).

Later on I will have something more to say regarding the relation of Plotinus' two realms, the realm of real Being and the realm of mere becoming. In so far as the problem of their genera is concerned, two things should be pointed out: (a) That according to Plotinus the correct number of the genera of Being as well as the number of the "genera" of becoming is just five; and (b) that some of the "genera" of this shadowy realm of becoming have the same names (but only the names) as the genera of real Being. Thus, ambiguity caused by homonymy is inevitable. This being the case, it will be well to examine briefly the Plotinian genera of real Being, as stated in VI. 2., before we proceed with the discussion of the so-called "genera" of becoming, that is, Plotinus' proposal of a new list of categories for the sensible world, as found in VI. 3.

It should be made clear from this point forward that Plotinus' doctrines, as stated in *Ennead* VI. 2., are more complicated than the usual and difficult to comprehend and interpret. A thorough account of them would call for a critical examination of the entire system of the Plotinian philosophy, a task which obviously falls outside the limited scope of this study. Besides, since our main purpose here is to consider and assess Plotinus' criticism of Aristotle's categorial doctrine as well as to contrast Plotinus' views with Porphyry's position on the same subject, there is no real need for us to deal with the Plotinian reinterpretation of Plato's metaphysical doctrines in detail. Therefore, I shall confine myself to a brief survey of the second tract (VI. 2.) by emphasizing the points which may shed light on Plotinus' criticism of the Aristotelian and Stoic sets of categories as found in the first tract (VI. 1.), and which may somehow explain the reduction of the categories as worked out in the third tract (VI. 3.) which is the central theme of this chapter.

1. *The Platonic Division of ὄντα*

Broadly speaking, Plotinus in the second part of his treatise *On the Genera of Being*, deals with two fundamental issues. First, he tries to determine the correct number of genera of true Being and to clarify the real nature of these genera, which are collectively identified as Νοῦς (Intellect) and described thus:

But behold Intellect, pure Intellect, and look upon it with concentrated gaze, not seeing it with these bodily eyes of ours. You see the hearth of substance and a sleepless light on it, and how they stand on it and how they stand apart, existing all together, abiding life and a thought whose activity is not directed towards what is coming but what is here already, or rather "here already and always here already," and the always present, and it is a thought thinking in itself and not outside. (VI. 2. 8, 5-11)

Second, he attempts to justify the exclusion (from the final fivefold list of genera of Being which he adopted) of such important candidates as (i) the Plotinian One, (ii) the Platonic Forms or Ideas and (iii) the Aristotelian categories.

In presenting Plotinus' positions on these issues in a synoptic way, I will have to assume familiarity with some well established and known Neoplatonic doctrines such as the following: (a) The doctrine of the three *ὑποστάσεις*, that is, One, Intellect, Soul and their relations to each other; (b) the doctrine of *κόσμος νοητός*, the peculiarities which distinguish it from *κόσμος αἰσθητός* and their relation.

It is true that Plotinus does not have an easy task in trying to express intelligibly the "wonders" of the intelligible world. The syntactical rules of Greek language and the traditional (i.e. Platonic) conceptual framework are both stretched to the point of breaking. Characteristically the seriousness and intensity of Plotinus' philosophical endeavor is not relieved, as it is in the case of a Platonic Dialogue, by dramatization, word play and the usual Socratic irony. By way of summary, it may be said that Plotinus tries to establish the following theses:

First, for him, the realm of true Being or *κόσμος νοητός* is not a unity, in the sense in which the One is a unity, that is, absolute Unity, but a unity in diversity. For:

Now we say that it is at the same time one and many, and that it is a richly variegated one keeping its many together in one. It is therefore necessary that this, which is one in this way, should either be generically one, and the beings its species, by which it is many and one; or that it should be more genera than one, but all grouped under one; or that there should be more genera, but none of them subordinated to any other, but each including those below it (whether they themselves are lesser genera or species with individuals grouped under them) and all contributing to one nature; the intelligible universe, which is certainly what we call being, would be constructed from all of them. (VI. 2. 2, 1-10)

Accordingly, the next step will be to determine the many genera of this unique Being.

Second, Intellect or Being comprises the following genera: *οὐσία* (substance or beingness), *κίνησις* (motion or activity), *στάσις* (rest or stability), *ἐτερότης* (difference or otherness), and *ταυτότης* (identity or

sameness).⁴ Plotinus explains the process of discovering these five genera in a way which is unmistakably reminiscent of the *Sophist*:

So all things are being, rest and motion; these are all-pervading genera, and each subsequent thing is a particular thing, a particular rest, and a particular motion. Now when anyone sees these three, having come into intuitive contact with the nature of being, he sees being by the being in himself and the others, motion and rest, by the motion and rest in himself, and fits his own being, motion and rest to those in Intellect: they come to him together in a sort of confusion and he mingles them without distinguishing them; then as it were separating them he perceives being, motion and rest, three and each of them one. Does he not then say that they are different from each other and distinguish them in otherness, and see the otherness in being when he posits three, each of them one? And again when he brings them back to unity and sees them in a unity, all one, does he not collect them into sameness and, as he looks at them, see that sameness has come to be and is? So we must add these two, the same and the other, to those first three, so that there will be in all five genera for all things, and the last two also will give to subsequent things the characters of being other and same. (VI. 2. 8, 26-41)

Third, these numerically distinct five genera are actually one in nature. For the Intellect or Being is not distinguished as something different from these genera. On the contrary, all of them are aspects of the unique κόσμος νοητός. They may be called "the constituents of Being" but very cautiously:

For if movement is the activity of substance, and being and the primary genera altogether are actively actual, movement could not be something incidental, but, being the activity of what is actively actual, could not any longer be called something which contributes to the completion of substance, but is substance itself: so that it has not entered some subsequent genus, not even quality, but is ranked as simultaneous.⁵ For being is not first being and then at rest: nor is rest a passive affection of it: and same and other do not come after it, because it did not become many afterwards, but was what it was, one-many: but if it is many, it is also otherness, and if it is one-many, it is also sameness. And these are enough for its substance: but when it is going to proceed to the lower levels, then there are others, which no longer make substance, but qualified and quantified substance, and let us grant that these are non-primary genera. (VI. 2. 15, 6-18)

Fourth, these five genera are called πρώτα (primary) because nothing else is predicated of them or is above them or is prior to them in any sense. The reason for this is as follows:

⁴ Plotinus refers to νοῦς, in VI. 2. 19, 9, as τὸ ἐκ πάντων, that is, a multiple being in which all genera are present, not as στοιχεῖα but as ἀρχαί.

⁵ *Ibid.* 9-10. The expression ἅμα γιγνόμενα stresses the point that the question of priority among the primary genera cannot be raised.

These are the primary kinds because you cannot apply any predicate to them which forms part of the definition of their essence. You will certainly predicate being of them, for they exist, but not as their genus, for they are not particular beings. Nor can you predicate being as the genus of motion and rest, for they are not specific forms of being: for some things exist as species of being, others as participating in being. Nor again does being participate in these others as if they were its genera: for they do not transcend being and are not prior to it. (VI. 2. 8, 11-49)

Fifth, there is no priority between the primary genera. They appear simultaneously and constitute the one-many intelligible world whose "plurality in unity" may be grasped by means of the following analogies:

If we wanted to see the nature of body, [and asked ourselves] something like what the nature of body itself was in this [perceptible] universe, when we had got to know thoroughly in the case of one of its parts—a stone for instance—that there was what functioned as its substrate, and its quantity, the magnitude, and its quality, colour for instance, should we not say in the case of every other body that there was what might be called substance, and quantity, and quality, all together, but divided by our reasoning into three, and that body was the three as one? (VI. 2. 4, 1-9)

But if someone takes one soul, without spatial separation of parts, without magnitude, supremely simple, as it will seem at the first application of the mind to it, how one would expect to find that it was after all many? For one would have thought that one could stop at this, when one had divided the living being into soul and body, and found the body multiform and composite and various, but was confident that one had found that the soul was simple and could rest from one's journey since one had come to the principle. Since, then, this soul has come ready to hand for us from the "intelligible place," as in the former discussion the body did from the perceptible, let us apprehend how this one is many, and how the many are one, not a one compound from many, but one nature which is many: for through this, when it has been apprehended and has become clear, we maintained that the truth about the genera in real being will become clear. (*Ibid.* 21-34)

Plotinus' examination shows that soul is a unity, though it is both οὐσία καὶ ζωὴ (substance and life):

It is therefore substance and life, or it has life. But if it has it, that which has is, in itself, not in life, and the life not in substance: but if one does not have the other, one must say that both are one. Or rather one and many, and as many as appear in the one: and one in itself but many in relation to the others: and it is one being, but makes itself many by what we may call its movement: and it is one whole, but when it undertakes, one might say, to contemplate itself, it is many: as if it cannot bear its being to be one when it is capable of being all the things that it is. And its contemplation is the cause of its appearing many, that it may think: for if it appears as one, it did not think, but is that One.⁶ (VI. 2. 6, 11-20)

⁶ The text ends with the words "ἀλλ' ἔστιν ἤδη ἐκεῖνο." A more literal translation than Armstrong's would be "but is that One already."

Given that Nous is higher than Soul in the hierarchy of the *ὑποστάσεις*, it is not difficult to conceive of it as "plurality in unity" in a way analogous to that in which the composite and extended body or the simple and unextended soul have been shown to be "one and many." The "many" are the five genera which were mentioned above. Taken together and considered inseparably they constitute the one Being or *κόσμος νοητός*. Plotinus speaks of it in this lofty way:

Well then, see how in this great, and overwhelming Intellect, not full of talk but full of intelligence, this Intellect which is all things and a whole, not a partial or particular intellect, all things which come from it are present. It certainly has number in the things which it sees, and it is one and many, and the many are its powers, wonderful powers, not weak but because they are pure the greatest of powers, fresh and full of life, we may say, and truly powers, without any limit to their action: so they are infinite, and infinity [is there] and greatness. Then when you see existing in it in this way proper to Intellect this greatness, along with the beauty that there is in it of its substance and the glory and the light around it, you see quality also, already in flower on it: and with the continuity of its activity you see magnitude, quietly at rest, appearing to your gaze; . . . For since its life is intelligent and its activity without imperfection, it leaves out none of the things which we now find to be works of intelligence, possessing them as realities and in the manner proper to Intellect. Intellect possesses them as in thought, but not the discursive kind of thought: but nothing is left out of all the things of which there are intelligible forming principles, but Intellect is like one great complete intelligible principle embracing them all, and it goes through them starting from its own first principles, or rather it has always gone through them, so that it is never true that it is going through them. (VI. 2. 21, 3-32)

As was observed earlier, Plotinus' conception of the nature of *κόσμος νοητός* is not easy to comprehend because the familiar categories of *κόσμος αἰσθητός* as well as the conceptual framework of discursive reasoning cannot help us. There is no doubt, however, that he believed that he was simply expounding the Platonic doctrine of the world of Forms. But in all probability he was doing something more than that, as Armstrong has pointed out in the following passage:

They [the genera of Being] are, rather, different ways of looking at one single reality. . . . So, when we concentrate our attention on its reality we see Being in it; when we attend to its life and activity of thought, we see Motion; when we turn back to its eternal changelessness we see Rest; when we concentrate on its diversity we see Otherness; when we recognize that in all its diversity it is still a unity we see Sameness. In this way, by an exegesis no more arbitrary than is usual for him, he is able to find support in the text of Plato for a view of the World of Forms as a world of boundless life expressing itself in an intense activity of contemplative thought, very

different from the world of statuesque immobility which appears in Plato's descriptions.⁷

At any rate, having established in the above way the real nature and the correct number of the primary genera of Being, Plotinus feels obliged to justify the exclusion from his list of other important candidates for the position. As I mentioned earlier, the excluded candidates are (a) the Plotinian One, (b) the Aristotelian categories and (c) the Platonic Forms, e.g. Goodness, Beauty, Virtue, Knowledge, etc. I shall consider here only the part which refers to Aristotle's categories. With regard to (a) and (c) I will quote only two passages which are indicative of Plotinus' reasoning in this connection. He writes:

Well then, as for the one, if it is the absolutely One to which nothing else is added, not soul, not intellect, not anything at all, this could not be predicated of anything, so that it is not a genus. But if it is the one added to being, that of which we speak as one-being, this is not primarily one. (VI. 2. 9, 5-9)

And again:

But why are not the beautiful and the good and the virtues among the primary genera—and knowledge and intellect? As for the good, if it is the first, the nature which we certainly do call that of the good, of which nothing else is predicated, but we call it this because we cannot indicate it in any other way, it could not be the genus of anything. For it is not predicated of other things, or each of the other things of which it was predicated would be spoken of as the good. And that good is before substance, not in substance. But if it is the good as a quale, the qualified in general is not among the primary genera. Well then, is the nature of being not good? First, it is so otherwise, and not in that way in which the first is: and the way in which it is good is not as a quale, but in itself. (VI. 2. 17, 1-11)

It is evident from these quotations that the exclusion of unity and goodness from the genera of Being is grounded on the assumption that they are either identified with the Absolute One, in which case they are put beyond even the sphere of authentic Being, which is identified as the sphere of Nous, that is, the second *ὑπόστασις*, or else they are posterior and as such they cannot be included in the *πρῶτα γένη*. This second alternative seems to justify also the exclusion of Aristotle's categories from Plotinus' short list of genera. Let us consider in some detail his remarks on this issue.

⁷ Armstrong [18], p. 247. In this connection, Bréhier remarks (in his Introduction to this treatise, p. 37): "*Il n'y a dans cette détermination rien qui ressemble à une synthèse constructive; c'est plutôt, pour employer une expression de Leibniz, une analyse réflexive qui éclaire divers aspects inséparables d'un même tout.*"

First of all, it should be noted that the name of the first Aristotelian category, that is, οὐσία (substance), is found among the names by which the five Plotinian "primary genera of Being" are named. But this should not mislead anybody. The same name names two completely different entities, namely the real Substance of the Intelligible realm and the "so-called" substance of the sensible realm, as Plotinus calls it. Thus, we clearly have here a case of homonymy. He states:

This is to be understood as being said about what is called substance here below: if it applies in any way to that intelligible substance, it is perhaps analogously and ambiguously. Thus it is said to be the first in relation to what comes after it. For it is not the first in any unqualified sense, but substantial sensibles are last in relation to intelligibles but first after them. (VI. 3. 5, 1-5)

Plotinus in this tract devotes three chapters to the other nine Aristotelian categories. He treats quantity and quality more extensively and discusses the rest collectively. With regard to quantity he observes:

But now, why is the quantum not in the primary genera, and also the quale? Now, the quantum is not primary with the others because they are simultaneous with being. For movement is with being as the activity of being, since it is its life: and rest came in as well in substance itself: and still more is being same and other associated with these three classes, so that sameness and otherness also are seen together with them. But number is posterior to these classes and posterior to itself, and the posterior comes from the prior and numbers come one after another in order, and the posterior exist in the prior: so number should not be counted among the first genera: and we should enquire whether it is a genus at all. But magnitude is still more subsequent and composite: for it is number in this particular thing—and a line is some sort of two and a surface of three.⁸ (VI. 2. 13, 1-12)

Plotinus goes on to suggest that number may belong to the genus of στάσις (Rest), while magnitude may be consigned to the genus of κίνησις (Motion).⁹ But he proposes to discuss all this at a later stage.¹⁰

With regard to quality the argument is the same as in the case of quantity. Since it is one of the consequents of substance, it cannot be primary; hence it must be posterior. Consider, for example, the following passage:

But as for quale, why is it not among the primary genera? It is because this also is posterior and comes after substance. In composite substances, then, which are made up of many elements, and in which numbers and quantities

⁸ And if number cannot be among the Plotinian primary genera, then, *a fortiori*, no other kind of Aristotelian quantities can.

⁹ It is the logical characteristic of a genus to be predicated of its species equally, so that species cannot be prior or posterior to each other in reference to their common genus.

¹⁰ Plotinus is referring presumably to his treatise *On Numbers*, that is, VI. 6.

produce their differentiation, there might also be qualities, and a certain common element will be discerned in them: but in the primary genera the distinction which must be made is not between simples and composites but between simples and those which make an essential contribution to substance, not to a particular substance. All the same, we did think it right to say elsewhere that the elements which contributed to the essential completion of substance were qualities only in name, but those which came from outside subsequent to substance were qualities [in the proper sense], and that those which were in substances were their activities, but those which came after were already passive affections.¹¹ (VI. 2. 14, 1-18)

Be that as it may, the point is that quality, like quantity, cannot be included in the Plotinian primary genera.

Finally in chapter sixteen Plotinus considers the remaining seven categories which are excluded from the primary genera because they are either posterior or composite and, therefore, unsuitable candidates for that high position. Since this chapter has the length of a paragraph and is unusually clear, let me quote it here without further comment:

But how could "relation," which is like a side-shoot, be among the first [genera]? For the state of being related is of one thing to another and not of a thing to itself. "Where" and "when" are still further away. For the "where" means one thing in another, so that there are two: but the genus must be one, and not a compound: and there is not any place in the intelligible world: but now we are speaking of the things which truly exist. And we must consider whether time is there: but it is more likely that it is not. But if it is a "measure," and not just a measure, but a "measure of movement," there are two [components] and the whole is composite and posterior to movement, so that it is not where movement is in a division on the same level. And "acting" and "being affected" are in movement—if being affected is really in the intelligible world at all: and "acting" involves two: and so likewise does "being affected;" neither, therefore, is simple. And "having" implies two, and "position" means one thing in another, so that there are three. (VI. 2. 16, 1-13)

The rest of the present tract is an eloquent description of the unique *κόσμος νοητός*, which "since it has the real beings in itself it is a 'complete' living being and 'the absolute living being'" (*Ibid.* 21, 55-57). But there is no need to repeat its themes here, especially as it is not related to our topic and it has been ably treated by others.¹² Therefore, I shall leave Plotinus' realm of Intelligible Being and come down to this sensible world in order to examine his proposal of modifying the Aristotelian categorical doctrine in such a way as to make it Neoplatonically accept-

¹¹ As Porphyry showed, PAC pp. 66-67, homonymy and analogy should not be confused. Plotinus' use of both terms in reference to the "genera of Being" criticizes, in all probability, Aristotle's insistence that τὸ ὄν, strictly speaking, is not predicated ὁμωνύμως but covers a case of ἀπ' ἐνὸς καὶ πρὸς ἓν predication.

¹² E.g. Armstrong [17], and [18].

able. Before doing that, however, something must be said about the relation of the two realms of being, since this distinction is important not only for the understanding of Plotinus' criticism of Aristotle's categories, but also for the correct understanding of Porphyry's position on this problem.

2. *Being, Becoming and Their Relation*

The third tract of the sixth *Ennead*, which I will discuss hereafter, opens in the following characteristic way:

We have explained the way in which we think about substance and how it might accord with the thought of Plato. But we must also enquire about the other nature, whether we should posit the same genera which we posited in the intelligible, or more here below, adding others to those, or altogether different ones, or some as they were there but others otherwise. We must of course understand "the same" [genera] analogously and ambiguously: this will become obvious when we have got to know them. Our starting point is this: since our discussion is about sense-objects and every sense-object is included in this universe of ours, it will be necessary in considering the universe to seek to divide its nature and distinguish its elements and arrange them by genera. (VI. 3. 1, 1-11)

From this passage at least two things are evident: (1) The sharp contrast between the realm of true Being and the realm of mere becoming, that is, the sensible universe which Plotinus terms "the other nature" (*ἑτέρα φύσις*); and (2) the purpose which Plotinus poses to himself in the present tract is to determine under what genera the constituents of this universe fall, and whether or not these "genera" are similar to (or the same as) the genera of the other realm.

Given, however, that this realm of becoming is a "mixture" of body and soul, Plotinus alerts us that the investigation should not take into consideration the latter which is really not of this world but "alien." For, as he explains:

But since here below also in the mixture and composition one element is body and the other soul—for the All is a living thing—and the nature of soul is in that intelligible All and will not fit into the classification of what is called substance here below; we must, even if it is difficult to do so, all the same leave soul out of the investigation in which we are at present occupied; just as if someone wishing to classify the citizens of a city, by their property assessments or skills for instance, left the resident foreigners out of count. (*Ibid.* 23-28)

As to the question whether the genera posited for the intelligible sphere will do well also with regard to the sensible sphere, Plotinus' answer seems to be negative. Inasmuch as the two realms are different, Plotinus

thinks that distinct and "new genera" must be sought for this universe. Thus the "new genera" can be called "genera" only analogously and homonymously.¹³ In no way can they be regarded as "primary genera."

And first of all we should consider what is called substance, agreeing that the nature in the sphere of bodies can only be called substance ambiguously, or should not properly be called substance at all but coming into being, because it is adapted to the idea of things in flux. (VI. 3. 2, 1-4)

Accordingly, ontologically important terms, such as being and substance may be used in reference to the sensible world, but only homonymously, since the so-called ὄντα of this sensible realm are mere images (εἰκόνες) and reflections of the realities of the intelligible realm. Thus, the relation between these two realms of existents is analogous to the relation of a living being and its portrait. While "Up There" everything is both "simple" and "substantial," "down here" everything is "composite" and "shadowy."¹⁴ Consider:

Or rather, what we call its underpart is an image of it, but not cut off, but like images in mirrors, [which last] while the archetype is present outside. But one must understand what "outside" means. And as far as that which is before the image, the total intelligible universe, [is] completed from all intelligibles, like this universe here below, which is an image of that one, [is itself a living being] as far as it is possible for an image of the Living Being to preserve the Living Being, as a drawing or a reflection in water is the ghostly image of that which appears to be there before the water and the drawing. But the image in the drawing and the water is not of the composite, but of the one formed by the other. So the image of the intelligible is not of its maker but of the things contained in the maker, which include man and every other living being: this here is a living being and so is that which made it, each in a different sense and both in the intelligible.¹⁵ (VI. 2. 23, 36-46)

Insofar as the "genera" of the realm of becoming are concerned, there is a passage in the third chapter of the third tract which is very suggestive and illuminating.¹⁶ We have in this passage many tentative proposals regarding the so-called "genera" of the sensible world. This passage reads as follows:

¹³ That is to say that the so-called "genera" of becoming have nothing in common with the genera of Being except for the name.

¹⁴ Consider the following characterizations of the hypostases with regard to unity:

a. The One is "παντελῶς ἓν" (VI. 2. 9, 30);

b. The Intellect is "τὸ ἐκ πάντων" (VI. 2. 19, 9); and ὅλον ἓν (VI. 2. 6, 16);

c. The Soul is "πολλὰ καὶ ἓν" (VI. 2. 4, 31).

¹⁵ Consider, in this connection, Plato's description of the "ζῶον τέλειον" in *Timaeus* 32d-34b.

¹⁶ The importance of this passage is that Plotinus presents here his tentative proposals for the reduction of Aristotle's categories in a concise manner.

But let us explain how we should divide: this is the way to begin with; it is one thing to be matter, another to be form, another to be the composite of both, and another to be the peripheral characteristics: and of the peripheral characteristics, some are only predicated, some are also incidental: and of the incidentals some are in these three [matter, form, and composite], but in other cases these three are in the incidentals; others are their activities, others their passive affections, and others consequences. . . . But as for the composite of both [matter and form] if this alone is substance, matter and form are not substances: but if they are also this, we must investigate what they have in common. But the characteristics which are only predicated would come under relation, being a cause or being an element for instance. And the incidental characteristics in the three would be quantitative or qualitative, in so far as they are in them; as for the cases where the three are in the incidentals, this would be like place and time; their activities and passive affections would be like movements; their consequences like place and time, the place a consequence of the composite, the time of the movement. But the three will go into one, if we can find something common, the ambiguous substance here below: then the others will follow in order, relation, quantity, quality, in place, in time, movement, place, time. Or, if one leaves out place and time, "in place" and "in time" are superfluous, so that there are five, on the assumption that the first three are one: but if the first three do not go into one, there will be matter, form, composite, relation, quantity, quality, movement. Or these last also could go into relation: for it is more inclusive. (VI.3.3, 1-32)

It is clear from this lengthy quotation that Plotinus presents successively several tentative lists of categories or "genera"¹⁷ of the sensible world which differ from each other in that the number of their listed members is not the same as the following tables show:

Plotinus				Aristotle
Elevenfold	Sevenfold	Fivefold	Twofold	Tenfold
matter	-----	-----	-----	-----
form	-----	-----	-----	-----
composite	composite	composite	composite	substance
relation	relation	relation	relation	relatives
quantity	quantity	quantity	-----	quantity
quality	quality	quality	-----	quality
where	-----	-----	-----	where
when	-----	-----	-----	when
place	place	-----	-----	-----
time	time	-----	-----	-----
motion	motion	motion	-----	-----
-----	-----	-----	-----	acting
-----	-----	-----	-----	passion
-----	-----	-----	-----	having
-----	-----	-----	-----	position

¹⁷ The quotation marks in "genera" indicate that the reference is to the so-called "genera" which, in Plotinus' view, should be called categories.

A comparative examination of the Plotinian lists of categories of the sensible world and the Aristotelian list of the ten categories yields quite interesting and important results which, by way of summary, may be tentatively stated as follows:

First, four Aristotelian categories do not appear at all in any of the four Plotinian lists. The missing categories are identified as those which Plotinus utterly rejected in VI. 1. as either unnecessary and reducible to other basic categories, or as capable of being subsumed under a newly issued category.

Second, a new category appears constantly in three Plotinian lists. This category, like all the others, except for substance, is absorbed by the category of relation in the last list. I am referring here to the category of *κίνησις* (motion) which was called on by Plotinus to substitute for the Aristotelian categories of action and passion, as has been seen.

Third, it follows from the above statements that eventually only two of the Aristotelian categories, *ἔχειν* and *κεῖσθαι*, are completely absent from the Plotinian lists. It is also notable that place and time are listed among the categories in two Plotinian lists, though Aristotle did not consider them distinct and separate categories, but as continuous quantities, as we saw.¹⁸

Fourth, only the categories of *οὐσία* and *πρός τι* are found in the Aristotelian as well as in every Plotinian list. This, and the fact that relation is listed second in all Plotinian lists, prior to quantity and quality, indicates that this category had gained such importance that in the twofold list it seems to have absorbed all the other categories on the Aristotelian list except for substance. Yet, paradoxically enough, Plotinus in the present tract does not treat this category in a manner appropriate to its status.¹⁹

Fifth, in the last and shortest (twofold) Plotinian list, one may recognize the old Platonic division of being, i.e. "absolute being" and "relative being," as it is customarily rendered.²⁰ However, Plotinus seems to favor the fivefold division of the categories of becoming for the probable reason that this list corresponds to the fivefold division of the "genera of Being."²¹

¹⁸ The point is that time and place, as consequents of motion and the composite respectively, are derivative and reducible.

¹⁹ In Aristotle's scheme *ποσόν* consistently occupies the second place after *οὐσία*. But the point was debatable among commentators. See Dillon [88], p. 133-134, and Chapter Three above.

²⁰ Dillon [88], p. 8.

²¹ See Chapter Four, section 2. Correspondence to the Platonic five genera is not among Plotinus' reasons which support the fivefold division of "genera" with regard to sensible world.

Sixth, Plotinus' fivefold list shares with the Aristotelian list of ten categories the following four: substance, quantity, relation, and quality. Motion, the fifth category in the Plotinian list, is evidently non-Aristotelian. For Aristotle κίνησις is to be found in more than one category, so that it is called, as the case may be: locomotion, alteration, augmentation and diminution, generation and corruption.²² Its promotion to the status of a category by Plotinus can be viewed as necessitated by the dynamic character of the Neoplatonic philosophy in which such doctrines as eternal emanation, derivation of the sensible world from the intelligible, (both of which are conceived as animated), and the return of the soul to its origin play a fundamental role.

Seventh, in at least one of the proposed lists, Plotinus finds it necessary to include matter and form as distinct "genera" along with the composite, because he was unable to see what all of them have in common that would justify their being called οὐσίαι. He was well aware that (a) if all of them were substances, then the composite or individual sensible substance would appear to be a collection of substances; and (b) if they were not substances, then the composite, as a substance, would appear to have derived its substantiality from something which was non-substantial. Since either alternative leads to inconsistencies, Plotinus tried to avoid the worse and chose the latter alternative.²³

Eighth, the Plotinian category of what he calls composite constitutes the basic category in all the proposed lists. It seems to be the parallel of primary substance in Aristotle's list, though strictly speaking πρώτη οὐσία, from an Aristotelian point of view, cannot be a category because "it is predicated of nothing."²⁴ Only species and genera, that is, secondary substances, can be predicated of many things so that they are called appropriately categories. But, in Plotinus' view, τὰ εἶδη, if considered in themselves, should not be included in the so-called substances of the sensible realm. For they, like soul, belong to the intelligible realm.

Ninth, the implication of the last stated thesis seems to be that Plotinus presented his "genera" as a set of categories which are adequate to account for the peculiarities of the sensible world. But he never lost sight of the important distinction between this realm and the realm of authentic Being. Thus, he was able to criticize Aristotle for presenting the categories of the sensible as "genera of Being," and as being unable to discern the ambiguity involved in using homonymous terms to cover both this universe and the "Other."

²² *Categories*, Chapter Fourteen.

²³ For a fuller statement of this point, see the next section.

²⁴ We recall that, for Aristotle, this was the characteristic of primary substance (3a 8-9).

In this light, then, the relation between the Plotinian and Porphyrian interpretations of Aristotle's categories becomes really problematic. For Plotinus' criticism of their inadequacy in terms of their supposed ontological claims, seems to contrast sharply with Porphyry's favorable position which is based in his logico-linguistic exegesis. And yet, in a deeper analysis, Porphyry who defends Aristotle's categorial doctrine, and Plotinus who criticizes it, do not disagree so sharply. In the next chapter I will elaborate on this point and clarify this seeming paradox. In the remainder of the present chapter, I will consider and discuss the list of Plotinus' five categories of becoming, which is only Aristotle's list reduced considerably and modified Platonically.

3. *Plotinus' Categories of Becoming*

The remaining twenty-five chapters of the present tract are devoted to the discussion of the proposed five categories of the sensible realm. In accordance with the role which they play in the Plotinian theory, the proportional length devoted to each of them is as follows:

- (a) Substance, seven chapters;
- (b) Motion, seven chapters;
- (c) Quantity, five chapters;
- (d) Quality, five chapters;
- (e) Relation, one chapter.

They are considered and discussed in the following order: substance, quantity, quality, motion and relation.

As expected, priority is given to the category of the "so-called" substance in respect to both length and order. After it comes the Plotinian category of motion which, as a new category, needed to be carefully considered and established. With regard to the categories of quantity and quality nothing is unexpected. It is surprising, however, that the discussion of relation has been compressed into one small chapter, in a way which contrasts sharply with the treatment given to the same category in the first tract. How is this discrepancy to be explained?

Without intending to offer a full explanation of this discrepancy, it may be observed that the category of *πρός τι* encompasses, in a wider sense, the other three Plotinian categories, that is, quantity, quality and motion. This is clear in the twofold division of the categories, as shown in the above table. Therefore, it may be argued that Plotinus found it unnecessary to discuss this category at length, since he had done so with regard to the other three. However that may be, it will be worthwhile to examine very briefly how Plotinus considers each of his categories of the sensible world. In my discussion I will follow the same order as Plotinus did, so I will begin with the "so-called" substance.

a. The Category of οὐσία

Plotinus opens the discussion on the first of his categories, in which he included matter, form, and the composite, by raising the question of "What is it, then, which is the same in the three, and what will it be which makes them substance, the substance in things here below?" (VI. 3. 4, 1-2). Seeking for the "common factor" which will allow the three entities, matter, form and composite, to be regarded as one "genus," Plotinus raises the further questions:

But what is the common factor of matter and form? And how can matter be a genus, and a genus of what? For what essential differentiation is there belonging to matter? But in what genus is the product of both to be ranked? If the product of both is itself bodily substance, and each of them is not body, how could they be ranked in one and the same genus with the composite? And how could the elements of a thing be ranked with the thing itself? But if we were to start with bodies, we should be starting with syllables. But why should we not say analogously, even if the division is not on the same lines, that instead of being in the intelligible there is matter here below, and instead of the intelligible movement there is form here below, a kind of life and perception of matter, and that matter not being out of itself corresponds to rest, and that there are sameness and otherness, since there is plenty of otherness, or rather unlikeness, here below? (VI. 3. 2, 9-22)

Resort to analogy, then, which would mean to conceive matter and form as analogous to the genera of the true Being, Substance and Motion respectively, is excluded for reasons given in the rest of VI. 3. 2. Instead, Plotinus goes on to consider five alternatives of "the common factor" or "common element," some of which resemble Aristotle's characteristics of substance.

According to the first alternative, the common element is identified as ἔδρα or ὑποβάθρα (i.e. that which has the capability to serve as base). This, Plotinus remarks, may be true with regard to matter or the composite. But apparently it cannot apply to form which, on this ground, would not be allowed to be considered as substance. So the first candidate must be eliminated.

According to the second alternative, the common element is identified as "not belonging to another" (VI. 3. 4, 7-8).²⁵ This is evidently true in cases of composite substances, such as Socrates. But what about form and matter? Are they not said to be the form and matter of something else? To meet objections of this sort, Plotinus proceeds to distinguish correctly, it would seem, between that which is said of something else because it is a part of that thing considered as a whole, and that which

²⁵ The μὴ ἐν ἄλλῳ characteristic distinguishes οὐσία from συμβεβηκότα.

is said of something else, though they differ from each other. It is to the former where both matter and form belong. Whereas attributes, such as "white" for instance, which are predicated of something distinct from itself, belong to the latter. Consider:

That then which belongs to another and is said to be of that other is not substance: substance, that is, is what belongs to that which it is, or, if it is a part, is an essential completion of a composite of its own kind: for the composite is either or both parts of itself, but in relation to the composite each part is said to belong to it in another sense: or if it is a part, it is called so in relation to something else, but by itself its natural existence is said to be in being what it is, not in belonging to another. (VI. 3. 4, 20-26)

According to the third alternative the common element is identified as *ὑποκείμενον* (substrate). Plotinus thinks that this property is common to all three entities, viz. matter, form and composite, but not without some qualifications. For example, he contends that matter is said to be substrate to form in a sense which is not the same as when the composite is said to be substrate to accidents, activities, consequents etc. (*Ibid.* 34-35).

According to the fourth alternative the common element is identified as "not being in a substrate." Plotinus observes that this characteristic cannot be applied to all entities called substances, unless that which is in the substrate is not there "as a part of that in which it is" (VI. 3. 5, 8-10). Thus, form will not be present in matter as "in a substrate," nor will man or humanity be present in Socrates. For, as Plotinus explains, humanity, unlike boldness and whiteness, is a "part of Socrates" (*Ibid.* Line 13).²⁶

It may be recalled here that Aristotle did not, in the end, admit this characteristic as the *ἴδιον οὐσίας* on the ground that it did not characterize substances solely. For it is applicable to *differentiae* as well. Plotinus seems to reject the view that *differentiae* are *μὴ ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ*. To support this thesis he argues along the following lines:

But if someone says that not being in a substrate is not a peculiarity of substance, for the essential differentiation is not itself one of the things in a substance, it is by understanding [the differentiation] as "the two-footed" that he makes this assertion that it is not in a substrate: since, if he did not understand "the two-footed," which is a particular kind of substance, but "two-footedness," not meaning a substance but a quality, then the two-footed will be in a substrate. (*Ibid.* 23-29)

²⁶ "Man is part of Socrates" not in the same sense as his hand or head is part of him, but in the sense that Socrates is an entity composite of matter and form, Platonically speaking, the Form of man.

According to the fifth and last alternative, the common element is identified as being "neither in a substrate nor predicated of a substrate" (*Ibid.* 14-15). The "neither/nor," it may be recalled, was supposed to point to the peculiar characteristic of primary substance in Aristotle's text.²⁷ As it is stated, however, this formula can apply only to the composite. In order to make it fit all other entities, which Plotinus calls substances, he had to modify the formula a little by adding "as of something else" (*Ibid.* Line 15). This slight modification is very important because it allows Plotinus to draw the fundamental distinction between predicates predicated of a subject from which they differ essentially (e.g. "a piece of wood is white") and predicates predicated of a subject from which they do not differ essentially (e.g. "Socrates is a man").

For in saying that Socrates is human, I am saying that a particular human being is human, predicating humanity of the human in Socrates, "but this is the same as calling Socrates Socrates, and again as predicating 'living being' of this particular living being." (VI. 3. 5, 17-23)

In other words, cases of essential predication seem to be reducible to cases of self-predication, that is, tautologies. For example, to predicate 'man' of an individual is the same, according to Plotinus, as to say that "a man is man" or, more emphatically, "Socrates is Socrates." But the problem of predication is very complex and cannot be considered here.²⁸ Suffice it to state here that the formula "neither/nor" as modified by Plotinus can encompass both Aristotle's secondary substances and Plato's eternal Forms. Even so, matter is left outside. Realizing this, Plotinus gives up the effort to find a formula which will provide the needed "common element" or "common factor" and concludes in the following way:

But what is to be said about this substance here which we are discussing? It comes about that this substance can be understood in contrary ways according to one or more or all of these statements, since the statements fit both matter and form and the composite as well. (VI. 3. 5, 35-39)

Although he has said much about this issue, Plotinus is aware that he has not clarified the category of substance. Thus, he is ready to attempt another approach in order to discover what that peculiar characteristic is which distinguishes substance as a "genus" from the other "genera" of becoming. Eventually he will find a solution to this problem in what I shall call the doctrine of "double dependence." I will explain what this

²⁷ See note No. 24 above.

²⁸ On the problem of predication, I refer to Allen [368], Moravcsik [535], Nehamas [562], Owens, [574], and my [438].

expression is supposed to mean, after I have quoted Plotinus once again on the equivocation of the term εἶναι (to be) as applied to items belonging to different categories of the sensible realm:

But what is this "is" which applies to fire and earth and such-like things, and what is the difference between this "is" and the "is" which applies to the others? It is that one means simply to be and simply existing, but the other means to be white. Well then is the "is" which is added to the "white" the same as the "is" without addition? No, but one means primary being, the other being by participation and secondarily. For the "white" added to "being" makes the being white, and the "being" added to the "white" makes the white being, so that in both cases [there is something incidental], the "white" incidental to the "being" and the "being" incidental to the "white." (VI. 3. 6, 8-18)

Furthermore:

And in general the white has being because it is about being and in being: it derives its existence therefore from being: but being has being from itself and white from the white, not because it is in the white, but because the white is in it. But, since this being in the sense-world does not exist of itself, it must be said that it has its being from the real being and has its being white from the real white; that also which has the white has its being by participation in the being of that other intelligible world. (*Ibid.* 25-32)

Now it is somewhat easier to explain what distinguishes sensible substance from the other "genera" of the sensible realm. The distinction is based on the formula of "double dependence." For, as it is evident from the two passages quoted above, especially the second one, while the sensible being is dependent upon the "authentic Being" for its εἶναι, the sensible white depends upon the "authentic White" which in turn ultimately depends upon the "authentic Being." This means that in the case of sensible substance we have simple dependence, whereas in items which belong to other categories the dependence is double.²⁹ It is in this respect that the sensible "so-called" substance is differentiated from the other "genera" of becoming.

Let us turn our attention now to another point of importance which Plotinus discusses in this connection. I mean the problem of priority between the two constituents of the composite, matter and form. This is not an easy problem to solve because its solution, that is, priority of the one constituent over the other, seems to depend on the viewpoint from which one considers the whole matter.³⁰ Consider:

²⁹ This Plotinian doctrine is evidently necessitated by the Platonic ontological division of the cosmos, but it is in sharp contrast to Aristotle's position that οὐσία is not dependent in any way (*Metaphysics* 1028a 34-35, *Categories* 2a 33-35), which Porphyry accepted, PAC, pp. 88-90.

³⁰ For the Stoics, priority must go to matter; for the Platonists, to form; and for the Peripatetics, to the composite.

But if anyone should say that the things here which are based on matter have their being from it we shall demand where matter gets being and the existent from. We have explained elsewhere that matter is not primary. But if one says that the other things could not come into existence except on the basis of matter, we shall agree as far as sense-objects are concerned. But, even if matter is prior to these, nothing prevents it from being posterior to many things and to all the things there in the intelligible, since the being it has is dim and less than the things based upon it, insofar as they are rational principles and derive more from the existent but matter is utterly irrational, a shadow of rational form and a falling away from rational form. . . . But if the form is more existent than the matter, existence is no more something common to both, nor is substance a genus containing matter, form and the composite, but they have many things, those we are speaking of, in common, but their being is different. . . . So here also being is different in matter and in form, and both together come from one which flows in all sorts of different ways. (VI. 3. 7, 1-30)

It is clear, therefore, that Plotinus realizes at the end that the term 'to be' is a *πολλαχῶς λεγόμενον*, as Aristotle had pointed out.³¹ The conclusion reached by Plotinus, that is, that 'being' does not mean the same thing when applied to matter, form and the composite, to entities of the sensible world and to those of the intelligible realms, led him to declare that the division into elements must be abandoned. The next approach will be to concentrate on the sensible so-called substance considered as a "conglomeration of qualities and matter" (VI. 3. 8, 20).³² To the possible objection that in this light substance would appear to be confused with that which is not substance, Plotinus is ready to reply as follows:

And there is no need to object if we make sensible substance out of non-substances: for even the whole is not true substance but imitates the true substance, which has its being without the others which attend on it, and the other come into being from it, because it truly is: but here what underlies is sterile and inadequate to be being, because the others do not come from it, but it is a shadow, and upon what is itself a shadow, a picture and a seeming. (*Ibid.* 30-37)

That is the way in which Plotinus considers the sensible world whose "genera" or rather categories he tries to determine. This universe is simply a picture or sketch (*ζωγραφία*) drawn on a shadow, that is, the barren matter. Such a conception is evidently very different from that of Aristotle. But Plotinus thinks that he has said enough about the "so-

³¹ Aristotle's expression *πρὸς ἓν λέγεσθαι* has given rise to such modern coinages as Leszl's "focalcity of meaning," [185], p. 99, and Owen's [569], and Hamlyn's [475], "focal meaning."

³² In VI. 3. 8, 19-20, the sensible substance is described as "*συμφόρησις ποιότητων καὶ ὕλης*". For a detailed discussion of this, see Wurm [360], pp. 250-263.

called" substance. Next he proceeds to examine its kinds which provides him with the opportunity to criticize Aristotle's distinction between primary and secondary substances. I shall consider this issue briefly.

To begin with, Plotinus postulates body (*σῶμα*) as the highest "genus" with reference to the sensible world. Then, by applying the Platonic method of division he is able to obtain a scheme of subordinate species and genera in a way which closely resembles the "Porphyrian Tree."³³ This division of sensible substances is given in the following passage:

So much for what is called sensible substance and the one genus. But what species of it should one posit, and how should one divide them? Now the whole must be classed as body, and of bodies some are matterish and some organic: the matterish are fire, earth, water, air: the organic the bodies of plants and animals, which have their differences according to their shapes. Then one should take the species of earth and of the other elements, and in the case of organic bodies one should divide the plants, and the bodies of animals, according to their shapes. (VI. 3. 9, 1-9)

It should be noted here that the division which is based on such qualities as hot, dry, cold, and moist as well as the morphological division of the animated bodies, which is based on forms or shapes (*μορφαί*), are both related to sense perception. This is not out of place, Plotinus remarks, since the present discussion is concerned with the sensible substance and, for him, "This sensible substance is not simply being, but is perceived by sense, being this whole world of ours: since we maintained that its apparent existence was a congress of perceptibles, and the guarantee of their being comes from sense perception (VI. 3. 10, 12-17). Once again, Plotinus felt it necessary to stress the differences which separate the realm of becoming and the realm of Being.

With regard to the Aristotelian distinction between primary and secondary substances, Plotinus seems to agree that there are not different kinds of substance, because they do not differ essentially from each other. Yet, he rejects Aristotle's view as stated in the *Categories*, according to which the particular (i.e. primary substance) is prior to universal (i.e. secondary substance).³⁴ Plotinus thinks otherwise on this issue as it is evident from what follows:

And Socrates did not in his own person give being human to the non-human but humanity gave being human to Socrates: the particular human is so by participation in humanity. Since what could Socrates be except "a man of a particular kind" and what could the "of a particular kind" do towards being more of a substance? But if it is because "humanity is only a form" but Socrates is "form in matter," he would be less human in this

³³ *Isagoge* p. 4, 21-25.

³⁴ *Categories* 2a 11-18.

respect: for the rational form is worse in matter. Again, the more general is prior by nature, as the species is prior to the individual: but the prior by nature is also simply prior: how then could it be less? But the individual is prior in relation to us because it is more knowable: but this does not make a difference in actual fact. Then, if it were so, there would not be one definition of substance: for the definition of what is primarily and what is secondarily is not the same, nor do they come under one genus.³⁵ (VI. 3. 9, 27-42)

It may be noted here that the distinction between "prior by nature" (φύσει πρότερον) and "prior with regard to us" (πρὸς ἡμᾶς πρότερον) is parallel to Porphyry's distinction between "prior by nature" (φύσει πρότερον) and "prior by perception" (αἰσθήσει πρότερον). Also, it has been seen on what grounds "the more general" is to be considered as "prior by nature." What does not seem to be warranted is the dogmatic assertion that "what is prior by nature is prior unconditionally." This claim hardly accords with the statement that "the individual is prior in relation to us." For, if there is a sense in which the individual is prior, then consistently it cannot be maintained that "the prior by nature is also simply prior," that is to say, that the universal has absolute priority over the particulars.

Notwithstanding such unfortunate expressions, the Plotinian insight here is that for x to be prior to y in one sense does not necessarily imply that it will be prior to that in every other possible sense, unless x is a case of "prior by nature." This formula, we saw, played an important role in Porphyry's efforts to reconcile the Aristotelian doctrine of τὸδε τι (concrete individual) with the Platonic theory of εἶδη (universal Forms) as well as the Platonic-Aristotelian theories of the sensible world with the Platonic-Plotinian theories of the intelligible world.

In conclusion it can be said that the sensible so-called substance is accepted by Plotinus as a category of the sensible world. But no one should be misled as to the fact that the reality, to which this "genus" refers, is only an image of the authentic Being. Thus, the use of the term οὐσία in its double reference covers a case of horrific homonymy.³⁶

b. Plotinus' Category of ποσὸν

As in Aristotle's list, quantity occupies the second place in Plotinus' list of the "genera" of the sensible world. In his discussion of this "genus,"

³⁵ See the discussion in Chapter Three above.

³⁶ In this way, homonymy, which was used by Aristotle to cover cases at hand (e.g. a living being and its statue), is extended by Plotinus so that it covers the entire sensible universe.

Plotinus wants to make clear from the very beginning that (a) only quantities related to matter (but not absolute Quantity) will be considered here; and (b) only number (*ἀριθμὸς*) and magnitude (*μέγεθος*) are to be regarded as true quantities. He states:

But about the quantum and quantity, it has been said how one should locate it in number and size, in so far as each individual thing which is in the number of things in matter and the extension of the substrate is of a certain size—for the discussion is not about separate quantity but about the quantity which makes the wood three cubits long and the five which applies to the horses—and that only these things should be called quanta. . . . (VI. 3. 11, 1-6)

Accordingly, three of the seven Aristotelian kinds of quantity are left out. These quantities are identified as *τόπος* (place) and *χρόνος* (time), which Aristotle classified with the continuous quantities, and *λόγος* (speech), which Aristotle considered as a type of discrete quantity. According to Plotinus, these types of quantity are in fact reducible to the other "genera" which were mentioned above. Thus the first two, place and time (as concomitant to bodies and motion respectively) can be assigned to the category of relatives, while speech in one sense is quantitative but in another relates to motion. The justification of this reduction is stated as follows:

But [it has often been said] that time because it is the "measure of motion" should in its own nature also be given to the relative, and that place is what surrounds body, so that too is put in relation and the relative. (VI. 3. 11, 6-9)

Also:

But "syllable" and "word" have a quantitative character and come under the quantitative: for they are a sound of a certain length: but sound itself is a movement: so it must be generally referred to movement, as action is. (VI. 3. 12, 25-28)

In agreement with Aristotle, Plotinus rejects as non-quantities those comparatives which Porphyry called *ἀόριστα ποσά*, i.e. "more," "less," "more beautiful" etc., on the ground that they belong to relatives. For the same reason "large" and "small," as in the expressions "a large tree," "a large millet-seed," "a small mountain" etc., are reducible to comparatives and ultimately to relatives. For Plotinus, as for Aristotle, these expressions are respectively equivalent to "a tree larger (i.e. taller) than another tree" and "a mountain smaller than (i.e. not as high as) another mountain." Apart from that, Plotinus wants to assert that, unlike the "larger and smaller" which belong to the relatives, "the large is large by some kind of quantity" (VI. 3. 11, 12-13).³⁷

³⁷ Very Platonically, in VI. 3. 11, 12, Plotinus states that: "ποσότητι γὰρ τινι μέγα τὸ μέγα".

Considerations such as the above led Plotinus to accept that there is contrariety in the category of quantity, which Aristotle had categorically denied.³⁸ As has been seen, the possibility of receiving contraries was, for Aristotle, an indication that the "quantities" involved were in fact not quantities but relatives. Plotinus takes the opposite view:

We must allow then that there is opposition in the quantitative: for our notions admit the opposition, when we say "large" and when we say "small," and make our mental images opposite, just as when we say "many" and "few:" for we ought to say much the same about "few" and "many."³⁹ (VI. 3. 12, 1-5)

Although Plotinus agrees with Aristotle that the "up" and "down" cannot be considered as contraries, he insists that quantitative admits contrariety. He explains:

In these respects, then, there is an opposition in the quantitative: for there is no longer one in place, because place does not belong to quantitative: since, even if place did belong to the quantitative, "up" would not be opposite to anything, since there is no "down" in the All. But when "up" and "down" are spoken of in the parts, they could not mean anything else but "higher up" and "lower down" and are like "right" and "left:" and these belong to the relatives.⁴⁰ (VI. 3. 12, 19-25)

Finally, Plotinus accepts here what he had rejected in the first tract, that is, the Aristotelian distinction between continuous and discrete quantities and also the basis for this distinction as given by Aristotle: "It has been well said that the continuous is distinguished from the discrete by the common and the particular limit" (VI. 3. 13, 1-2). Number, according to Plotinus, belongs to the latter and can be subdivided into odd and even numbers. On the other hand, magnitude belongs to the former and is subdivided into lines, surfaces and solids. But to speak of division here is perhaps misleading. Instead, this procedure should be called enumeration (*καταριθμῆσις*) for the reason that the distinction prior/posterior is involved in the different magnitudes, whereas simultaneity characterizes the species of the divided genus. Plotinus states:

But how do we make distinctions in the continuous, if one kind is line, one plane and one solid? Now the distinctions one-dimensional, two-dimensional and three-dimensional do not seem to be proper to one who is dividing into species, but rather to one who is simply making a count.

³⁸ "A quantity has no contrary" (*Categories* 5b 11).

³⁹ *Ibid.* Aristotle uses the same examples to illustrate the meaning of "few" and "many."

⁴⁰ "It is most of all with regard to place that there seems to be contrariety of a quantity" (*Categories* 6a 11-12). PAC, p. 107.

For if in numbers also when they are taken like this according to the before and after, there is no genus common to them, there will be nothing common either to the first, second and third dimensions. But perhaps it is in so far as they are quantitative that they are one and the same, and some of them are not more quantitative and some less, even if some have wider extensions and some narrower. And numbers then would have what is common to them in so far as they are all numbers: for perhaps the number one does not produce the number two or the number two the number three, but the same produces all. But if the number-series does not come into being, but is, but we think it as having come into being, let the lesser number be earlier and the greater later: but in so far as they are all numbers, they are classed under one head. (VI. 3. 13, 9-23)

Now, if line is a quantity and if triangle is the product of three lines, the following question seems very reasonable: "Why is not the product of three lines included in quantity?"⁴¹ Plotinus' answer is that the triangle is not just three lines but "three lines in this particular disposition" (VI. 3. 14, 9). He also seems to share Aristotle's view that one and the same entity can be classed under two different categories provided that each time a different aspect of it will be considered. He writes:

But, if, because we say that the triangle is a *quale* and the quadrilateral also, we are going to put them in the qualified, there is no objection to putting the same thing in several categories: in so far as it is a magnitude, and a magnitude of a certain size, it is in the quantitative, but in so far as it presents a shape of a certain quality, it is in the qualitative. (*Ibid.* 18-22)

Consequently, it is not as absurd as it might look at first that geometry, which deals with such figures as triangles, quadrilaterals etc., is nevertheless "the study of magnitudes." However, the question remains as to what are the proper characteristics of the two categories of quantity and quality. It may be recalled here that Aristotle had claimed that "equal and unequal properly belong to quantitative," while "the like and unlike properly belong to qualitative."⁴² And yet triangles are spoken of as like and unlike. Plotinus' answer is that the Aristotelian specified characteristic of quantity does not abolish "the possibility of predicating likeness of some magnitudes: but if he said that "the like and the unlike belong to the qualitative" then, as we asserted, likeness in the quantitative must be understood in a different way" (VI. 3. 15, 5-7). This brings the discussion on quantity as a Plotinian category to an end. But there is a last point which needs to be considered before proceeding to examine the next category.

⁴¹ Aristotle considered geometrical figures as a kind of quality and Porphyry had to defend this position, PAC, pp. 132-133.

⁴² *Categories* 11a 15-19.

The point which Plotinus makes at the end of chapter fifteen is that, in contrast to Aristotle's position, the individual or primary substance signifies not a *τόδε τι* (a "this" or a concrete something), but rather a *ποιόν τι* (a qualified something). Hence, that which signifies *οὐσία* and *τὸ τὲ ἦν εἶναι* (essence) is not the individual but the universal as expressed by *λόγος* *qua* definition. Compared with what Aristotle says about these expressions in the *Categories*⁴³ and *Metaphysics*,⁴⁴ the following quotation is suggestive:

It was said about the qualitative that, mixed together with others, matter and the quantitative, it effects the completion of sensible substance, and that this so-called substance is this compound of many, and is not a "something" but a "something like". . . . It is as if, the visible Socrates being a man, his painted picture, being colours and painter's stuff, was called Socrates: in the same way, therefore since there is a rational form according to which Socrates is, the perceptible Socrates should not rightly be said to be Socrates, but colours and shapes which are representations of those in the form: and this rational form in relation to the truest form of man is affected in the same way. And so much for that. (VI. 3. 15, 23-37)

Unfortunately, Plotinus did not think it necessary to elaborate the point which he is making here, though an elaboration would be most welcome. He seems to distinguish between *λόγος* of man (i.e. definition) and *λόγος* of individual man, e.g. Socrates. But it is not clear (a) on what grounds this distinction is based, and (b) what is meant by *λόγος* in the case of Socrates. If we interpret *λόγος* in the second case as having the same meaning as in the first case, then it would seem to follow that for Plotinus even individuals are definable, which Aristotle had denied.⁴⁵ Such an interpretation may lead to the further hypothesis that Plotinus accepted "Forms" of individuals as has been suggested by modern scholars.⁴⁶

However, it is possible that *λόγος* in the second case does not mean definition as in the first case, but description or delineation (*ὑπογραφή*, as Porphyry would say). Thus, while the *λόγος* of man will give the essence of man, that is, "the-what-it-is-to-be-man" the descriptive account of Socrates will qualify and specify (more precisely, it will atomize) the *τι* by adding a collection of (accidental) properties, so that it will produce a *ποιόν τι* (qualified something).⁴⁷ In this light, the mean-

⁴³ *Ibid.* 3b 10-23.

⁴⁴ *Metaphysics* 1029b 13, 20, 27; 1031b 9; 1032b 14; 1035b 16.

⁴⁵ For Aristotle, *Categories* 2a 19-34, individuals admit the definition of their species.

⁴⁶ On this, see Armstrong [383], Blumenthal [398], and Rist [586].

⁴⁷ To grasp the difference between Plotinus and the Stoics in their conceptions of the sensible substance, one must keep in mind that their points of departure are exactly opposite, that is, the *γένος γενικώτατον* which is diversified by the *differentiae*, and the *ἄποιος ὕλη* which is enriched by the acquisition of qualities respectively.

ing of the above quotation will be the following: As the portrait of Socrates stands to the living sensible Socrates, so the λόγος (i.e. description) of Socrates (i.e. the individual man) stands to the λόγος (i.e. definition) of man (i.e. the universal). The implication of this analogy is that, for Plotinus, the universal is more real than the particular, in spite of Aristotle's assertions to the contrary.

c. The Category of ποιόν

With regard to quality, considered as a category of the sensible world, there are three main issues which Plotinus discusses: (a) its distinction from the other "genera," (b) its different kinds, and (c) its characteristics. Of these three issues, (a) is that on which Plotinus' views come very close to Aristotle's. On (b) and (c), their views diverge as will become clear from the discussion which follows.

It has been repeatedly stated by Plotinus that the sensible substance or "so-called substance" is not simple but complex. It is a συμφορησις, that is, a concrescence or coming together of many entities (VI, 3. 15,26). Its constituents are not only matter and form but also quantity, quality, and motion or absence of motion, that is, rest. Of quality, if it is taken separately from the amalgam, it can be said that it signifies "the distinct mark" or "the type of a thing." Consider:

But when each of the categories which have to do with so-called substance is taken separately, quality [must be said] to be in sense-objects, not the terms signifying "something" or "how much" or "movement" but those indicating the distinctive characteristic and the "of such kind" and "of what kind," for instance beautiful and ugly applied to the body; for there is only a verbal identity between the beautiful here and there in the intelligible, as there is also between the qualitative here and there. (VI. 3. 16, 1-8)

It is important to note here the equivocation of the term 'quality' as applied to the two realms, because Plotinus' discussion in the next several pages seems to rest on this homonymy. On this basis he distinguishes the virtues, arts and sciences which are classed with "sensible quality" from those which necessarily belong to the intelligible. He states:

But we suppose that geometry and arithmetic are double, and should rank one kind of them here in this qualitative, but the works of the soul itself directed to the intelligible should be ranked there. And indeed Plato says the same about music and astronomy.⁴⁸ So then the arts which are concerned with body and use perceptible tools and sense-perception, even if they are dispositions of the soul, since they are dispositions of the soul

⁴⁸ This echoes Plato's *Republic* 525a-541b.

inclining downwards are to be ranked in this qualitative here. And indeed there is nothing to prevent us from ranking the practical virtues here below, those which act in such a way that their action is of a civic kind, all those which do not separate the soul and lead it to the things there above, but work the good life here below, regarding this as preferable but not as necessary. (VI. 3. 16, 19-31)

The outcome of this procedure would seem to be, as Plotinus realizes, a distinction between "soul-qualities" and "body-qualities." By subdividing the psychic and bodily qualities, many and different kinds of quality may be obtained, which are not the same as those presented in the *Categories*.⁴⁹ But here a serious question is raised and discussed by Plotinus: How is it possible to divide quality into different "kinds?" For such a division, "differentiae" are needed. Where are they to be found? If qualities serve as *διαφοραὶ οὐσίας*, then what would serve as *διαφοραὶ ποιότητος*? It cannot be qualities, because that would be no less absurd than setting up "substances as differences of substances." The problem is not solved even if we take "the variety of sense-organs" as basis and criterion for the distinctions of different kinds of quality. Consider:

But, since we distinguish the differentiations of substances by qualities, and activities and actions as fine or ugly and in general of some kind. . . one might be in some difficulty about how one should divide the qualitative by species, what kind of differentiations one should use and from what kind of genus one should take them. For it is absurd to divide it by its identical self, as if one said that differentiations of substances were again substances. By what then does one differentiate white and black? And by what colours in general? From tastes and tangible qualities? But if these differentiations are by different sense-organs, the distinction is not in its subjects. But how does one distinguish qualia perceived by the same sense? (VI. 3. 17, 819)

Eventually Plotinus comes to accept the view that not all qualities constitute *differentiae*. The rule which he accepts is that "to look for differentiations of differentiations is impossible and irrational" (VI. 3. 18, 3-4). The reason why it is futile to seek for "differences of differences" is not difficult to understand, though not stated by Plotinus. For, it would seem that such an attempt leads to an infinite regress. But it is not clear on what grounds such a procedure can be characterized as irrational. Perhaps the reason for this is to be found in that only "essential qualities" (as Porphyry called them) can serve as *differentiae* by means of which definitions are obtained. Now, definitions seem indispensable to discursive reason in performing its function, which is to give explanations supported by arguments. But sense perception and intellect, as cognitive faculties, can dispense with definitions and arguments, since they do not aim at explanation, as Plotinus puts it:

⁴⁹ *Categories*, Chapter Eight.

But the truth is that it is either sense-perception or intellect which says that they are different, and they will not give a reason, sense-perception because reason does not belong to it, but only giving different indications, but the intellect everywhere uses its own simple acts of attention, not reasons, so that it says of each thing "this is this and that is that:" and there is an otherness in its movement which distinguishes one thing from another and does not itself need an otherness." (VI. 3. 18,7-12)

This is not the place to consider Plotinus' complex cognitive psychology. So let us return to the problem of the different kinds of qualities and the basis of their differentiation. It should be noted that Plotinus agrees here with Aristotle in grouping together (though with some qualifications) qualities and *qualia* which, we saw, he had rejected in the first tract. The qualifications suggested here by Plotinus are as follows:

We should rank with quality, as it appeared, the differentiated *qualia*, in so far as there is quality in them, not bringing them themselves into consideration, to avoid having two categories, but going up from them, to that after which they are called *qualia*. (VI. 3. 19, 1-4)

Insofar as the characteristics of quality are concerned, it may be recalled that Aristotle asserted in the *Categories* that qualities admit (a) contraries and (b) "a more and a less." Plotinus has some objections with regard to both (a) and (b). First of all, he cannot accept the Aristotelian view of contrariety as "the greatest possible difference."⁵⁰ He rejects it by arguing in the following way:

And how is it possible to say "the greatest possible" if there are not lesser differences in the intermediates? One cannot therefore say "the greatest possible" in the case of health and sickness. So contrariety is to be determined, by something else, not by the "as much as possible." (VI. 3. 20, 20-23)

Secondly, Plotinus accepts the basic Aristotelian distinction (made in *Categories* 11b 38-12a 25) between contraries without intermediaries (*ἄμεσα*) and contraries with intermediaries (*ἐμμεσα*). Health and sickness, for example, belong to the former, while virtue and vice or black and white belong to the latter. But there is a difference between these last two examples which Plotinus tries to clarify in the following way:

But one must see if there is not to every quality another contrary one: since in the case of virtue and vice even the mean appears to be contrary to the extremes. But in the case of colours [he says] the intermediates are not so. Perhaps therefore, because the intermediate colours are mixtures of the

⁵⁰ In *Metaphysics* 1061a 10-12, Aristotle speaks of the "πρώτας διαφορὰς καὶ ἐναντιώσεις τοῦ ὄντος". Also, *Categories* 6a 17-18, and Anton [11] *passim*.

extremes, we ought not to make a division of them by opposition, but [only] by white and black, [regarding] the others as compositions [of white and black].⁵¹ (VI. 3. 20, 1-7)

As for (b), that is, the characteristic that qualities admit of "a more and a less," Plotinus thinks that only *qualia* (sensible qualified objects participating in Quality) admit of degrees, but Quality as such is excluded. Consider:

But as for the "more" it appeared that it is in the participants, but there was a difficulty about health and justice. Certainly if each of these has the breadth for it, the permanent states themselves must be granted to have it. But there in the intelligible each is a whole and does not have a "more." (VI. 3. 20, 39-42)

d. The Category of κίνησις

Can κίνησις (motion) be established as a "genus" of the sensible world? This question has to be considered first for two reasons. First, because Aristotle did not consider motion as one of his categories. Secondly, because Plotinus thinks that the positing of motion as a new "genus" of the sensible realm is possible and desirable. Plotinus' claim depends on at least three conditions specified as follows:

- (a) "whether it would not be appropriate to refer it to another genus;"
- (b) "whether nothing higher than it could be predicated of it in its essence;" and
- (c) "whether by assuming many differentiations it will make species" (VI. 3. 21, 1-5).

With regard to (a) Plotinus argues that motion cannot be referred to any other of the "genera" which he has posited for this world. According to him, motion is to be identified neither with substance, nor with quantity, nor with quality, nor with relation. It is, as Plotinus puts it, ἕτερον (other, something else, different). Motion cannot be substance because it presupposes substance. Although attributive, motion has an independent reality in the same sense in which quantity and quality are said to have independent realities. It is this characteristic which distinguishes motion from relation, in Plotinus' view:

Nor again could it be correctly referred to relation, because movement is movement of something and not on its own: for in this way the qualitative would be in the category of relation: for quality is quality of something and in something: and the same will apply to the quantitative. But if it is because these are something particular, even if in so far as they exist they are of something else, the one is called quality and the other quantity, in the same way since, even if movement is movement of something, it is something

⁵¹ *Categories* 11b 38-12a 25.

before it is of something, we should grasp what it is on its own. In general, one should posit as relative not what first is, and then is of something else, but what the relationship generates without there being anything else beside the relationship in virtue of which it gets its name. . . . (VI. 3. 21, 9-17)

Before proceeding to answer the question "what is that entity, called motion, which, though attributive, has an independent reality, which makes its attribution possible?" Plotinus finds it necessary to make sure that "there is nothing prior to motion and predicated of it as its genus" (*Ibid.* 21-24). This was condition (b), as stated above. Change (μεταβολή) is the most serious candidate to be considered as "genus" of motion. But upon inspection, it appears (to Plotinus) to be a species rather than the "genus" of motion, because "change intends to signify merely one thing instead of another, but the range of meaning of movement includes transition which does not take a thing out of its proper nature, such as local movement" (*Ibid.* 42-44).⁵²

Since change is not the only "species" or kind of motion, as Plotinus understands it, he goes on to specify its other species. Among them are to be found not only generation, alteration, diminution and augmentation (Chapter Twenty-one), but also (Chapter Twenty-eight) actions and passions (ποιήσεις καὶ πείσεις). Accordingly, the condition (c) is also satisfied and, therefore, motion is established as one of the five Plotinian "genera" of the sensible world. An additional reason why motion must be considered as a "genus" is that it cannot be easily defined. As Plotinus put it, "But one could be confident that movement is a genus no less because it is difficult, or even impossible, to comprehend it in a definition" (*Ibid.* 22, 19-21).

Having established in this way that motion is a "genus," Plotinus felt it necessary to search for the "common element" of this "genus" which appears in all its species. The outcome of this search is stated in the following passage:

But common to all is being a progress and a leading from potentiality and the possible to active actuality: for everything that is moved according to any kind of movement has the pre-existing potentiality to do this when it comes into motion. (VI. 3. 22, 47-50)

Furthermore:

So that it would not be inappropriate if one were to say that movement is a form awake, opposed to the other forms which are static, in that they abide but it does not, and is a cause of other forms, when something comes to be after it. But if someone were to say that this movement which we are

⁵² Sometimes Aristotle used κίνησις as a synonym of μεταβολή, e.g. *Physics* 222b 30-32, and *Metaphysics* 1065b 14.

now discussing is the life of bodies, one must give it the same name as the movements of Intellect and Soul.⁵³ (VI. 3. 22, 13-18)

In addition to its being a dynamic form (εἶδος ἐγρηγορός), Plotinus characterizes motion as (a) "the passage from potentiality to that which it is said to be the potentiality of" (*Ibid.* 3-4);⁵⁴ (b) "perpetual otherness" (*Ibid.* 43-44); (c) being distinguished from "moved things," since "walking is not the feet but the activity in the feet which comes from their potentiality" (VI. 3. 23, 4-5); and (d) "qualified and the particular character of the movement is of such and such a kind in such and such things" (*Ibid.* 31-33). Thus an important conclusion is reached:

When, therefore, the potentiality of moving is a walking potentiality, it pushes, so to speak, and produces a continual change of place, but when it is a heating potentiality, it heats: and when the potentiality takes matter and builds it into a nature, it is growth, but when another potentiality takes away, it is diminution when that which has the potentiality of experiencing taking away is diminished: and when the generative nature is active, there is coming-to-be, but when this is impotent and that which has the potentiality of making things pass away is dominant, there is passing away, not that which occurs in what has already come to be, but in that which is in the way: and becoming healthy works the same way, when that which has the potentiality of producing health is active (but the opposite potentiality produces the opposite result). (*Ibid.* 20-30)

In Chapter Twenty-four Plotinus considers the contrary motions with regard to locomotion, such as ascending and descending, circular and linear. He concludes that "it seems that local movement is one movement taking its differentiations by externals" (VI. 3. 24, 14-15). As for integration or composition (σύγκρισις) and disintegration or dissolution (διάκρισις), which are considered in the next chapter (Chapter Twenty-five), Plotinus thinks that (a) they should not be identified with condensation (πύκνωσις) and rarefaction (ἀραίωσις) because such a supposition would entail the admission of void (κενόν); and (b) they are in a sense reducible to local motions. For:

Well then, if composition is a matter of the approach of one thing to another and coming close, and on the other side [dissolution] of going away back, one could say that they are local movements, saying that two things are moving to one or going away from each other. (VI. 3. 25, 5-9)

The last point which Plotinus discusses with regard to motion is its opposite. Whether this opposite is rest (στάσις) or stillness (ἡρεμία) is problematic. The distinction between these two notions is subtle and

⁵³ Plotinus' metaphor with regard to κίνησις conceived here as εἶδος ἐγρηγορός echoes Plato's *Sophist* 247a.

⁵⁴ In *Physics* 201a 11, κίνησις is defined as "ἡ τοῦ δυνάμει ὄντος ἐντελέχεια".

must be carefully considered. Their difference is that the former belongs to that which is by its nature immovable (*ἀκίνητον*), while the latter pertains to that which is movable (*κίνητον*) but for some reason rests or has come to a stop. In this respect, it is understandable that Plotinus insists on the distinction "But perhaps it would be better to allot rest to the intelligibles there, and to look for stillness here below" (*Ibid.* 27, 3-4). Accordingly, stillness appears to be the negation of motion in the sensible realm, though in the intelligible realm rest does not negate motion. Consider:

Why then do we not say that rest is the negation of movement also among the intelligibles? This is because it is impossible to say that rest is the abolition of movement because it does not exist when movement has stopped, but when movement exists rest also exists. And rest there in the intelligible does not consist in the fact that something which is naturally adapted to move is not moving, but in so far as rest has a hold on it, it stands still, but in so far as it is in motion it will always be moving: therefore it stands still by rest and moves by movement. But here below it moves by movement, but when movement is not there it stays still because it is deprived of the movement which it ought to have. (VI. 3. 27, 27-35)

The implication is that rest is not to be found in this sensible world in which everything is either in motion or is somewhat still. In other words, every entity of the sensible universe must be always in some kind of motion in reference to the absolute rest of the intelligible world. And there is no other reliable frame of reference. For, Plotinus argues, "If one means that it is a stillness which does not apply to what is in movement, one must enquire first if there is anything here below which is not in movement" (*Ibid.* 27, 11-14).⁵⁵

e. The Category of *πρός τι*

The last and short chapter of the present tractate (Chapter twenty-eight) is devoted to the fifth category of becoming, that is, relation which was discussed at length in VI. 1. In passing Plotinus notes that: (a) "It has been said that active doing and making and passive experience are to be called movements and one can say that some movements are absolute, some actions, and some experiences;" and (b) "it has been said about the other so called genera that they are to be referred to these" (VI. 3. 28, 14).⁵⁶ Then he states the following with regard to *πρός τι*, which he had characterized as "manifestly an offshoot" (VI. 2. 16, 1):

⁵⁵ Whether Plotinus echoes Heraclitus' doctrine of flux here or advances a theory of general relativity is difficult to tell but the question deserves thorough investigation which cannot be attempted here.

⁵⁶ See Chapter Four above.

And about relation, that it is a disposition of one thing in relation to another, and that they enter into it both together and simultaneously: and there is relation when a disposition of a substance produces it; the substance will not be relative as substance, except in so far as it is a part of something—hand or head for instance—or a cause or a principle or an element. (*Ibid.* 4-8)

Consequently, Plotinus seems to agree with Aristotle in that (1) the relatives are closely connected with substances; that (2) they presuppose a plurality (at least two) of entities which must exist simultaneously; and that (3) no substance is a relative. This last point, we recall, was very controversial. It was discussed by Aristotle at length in the *Categories* and was the main reason why he modified the definition of relatives, as has been seen. Unlike Aristotle, Plotinus is prepared to accept that in some cases substances may be regarded as relatives. These cases are specified as parts, causes, principles and elements. Now, Aristotle might have objected to this that in all these cases substances are not considered *qua* substances. As Porphyry puts it, it is not Socrates *qua* primary substance, but Socrates *qua* father of his sons, who can be regarded as a relative (efficient cause).⁵⁷

Finally Plotinus mentions an "ancient division" of relatives.⁵⁸ And having thus determined the number and the nature of the genera of becoming, he closes his treatise, *On the Genera of Being*.

4. Conclusion

It was the purpose of the present chapter to examine Plotinus' proposal of the five "so-called genera" of becoming, that is, the reduction of Aristotle's categories. In view of Plotinus' rejection of Aristotle's categories as "genera of Being," which was discussed in the previous chapter, it was necessary to consider in some detail the basic Plotinian distinction between κόσμος νοητός and κόσμος αἰσθητός, in order to understand better the function of Plotinus' categorial scheme. For it was on the basis provided by this cosmological and ontological distinction that Plotinus' central criticism of Aristotle's categories was constructed. Since these categories do not refer to the realm of real Being, they cannot be regarded, Plotinus insists, as "genera of Being." Whether they can be considered as genera at all appeared problematic. For Plotinus, "the

⁵⁷ PAC, pp. 140-141.

⁵⁸ In Plotinus' words, "It is also possible to divide relation, as the ancients divided it, distinguishing some relations as productive, some as measures, some consisting in excess and deficiency, some in general separating things by likenesses and differences. And so much for these genera" (VI. 3. 28, 8-12). If so, it is easy to see how this Plotinian "genus" was able to absorb all the Aristotelian categories except for substance.

genera of Being'' were identified with the five μέγιστα γένη of which Plato speaks in the *Sophist*. It is only in a homonymous way, then, that we can speak of ''genera'' with reference to the world of becoming.

Plotinus' views as revealed in the discussion of the present chapter can be summarized as follows:

First, the applicability of Aristotle's categories must be restricted to this sensible realm, since, in any case, Aristotle did not intend to capture in his categorial net all beings.

Second, even within the sphere of becoming the number of ten categories or ''genera'' is probably too large, given that only five genera are sufficient to account adequately for the realm of real Being.

Third, even those of Aristotle's categories which can pass the Plotinian tests of generality, unity, simplicity and irreducibility must be modified somehow before they can be accepted in the Plotinian scheme as ''genera'' of becoming. The details of such a modification have been exposed in this chapter.

With regard to the adopted list, viz. substance, quantity, quality, motion, relation, it may be observed that:

(1) In the fivefold division of Plotinus' ''genera'' we have a fifty per cent reduction of Aristotle's ten categories.

(2) There is a correspondence between the five Plotinian ''genera'' of becoming and the five Platonic (and Plotinian) genera of Being which cannot be accidental.

(3) Except for substance which is to be found in all lists, that is, the Plotinian, the Aristotelian and the Platonic, the other four ''genera'' of Plotinus' list are either Aristotelian (e. g. quantity and quality) or Platonic (e.g. motion) or else are used in both senses, the narrow Aristotelian and the broad Platonic (e.g. relation).

In these respects, the Plotinian categorial scheme of becoming as formulated and presented in the third tract of the sixth *Ennead*, would appear to comprise elements borrowed from both Plato and Aristotle. It was left to Porphyry to continue this process of reconciling the two philosophers by adapting and synthesizing their doctrines. This will become clear from the following final chapter of this study where a comparison and contrast between Porphyry's exegesis of Aristotle's categorial doctrine and Plotinus' criticism of it will be attempted.

CHAPTER SIX

PLOTINUS, PORPHYRY AND ARISTOTLE'S CATEGORIES

1. *Diversity in Unity*

The purpose of this study has been to examine the problem which Aristotle's doctrine of categories presented to Porphyry. In view of the fact that he was a devoted and respectful student of Plotinus, who had taken a critical position towards Aristotle regarding the categorial doctrine, Porphyry's favorable comments on it appear problematic. Porphyry, of course, was well aware of Plotinus' position on this and other matters, since he was in charge of editing the writings of the aging philosopher. He had accepted Plotinus' authority and followed him on many doctrines which determined the form of Neoplatonism as a philosophical movement. Yet, he was not prepared to follow Plotinus in his critical approach to Aristotle's doctrine of categories. On the contrary, in a series of commentaries he defended Aristotle and his categorial doctrine against criticisms raised by many Stoics and Platonists. But he never mentioned Plotinus by name, at least in his extant commentary, presumably out of respect for the great man.

It will be appropriate, then, in the last chapter of this study, to review briefly and compare Plotinus' and Porphyry's positions on Aristotle's categories. Such a comparison may help us better understand how these two otherwise close friends and congenial philosophers differ in their respective approaches to Aristotelian categories.¹ Since we have considered Porphyry's extant commentary and the way in which he dealt with many traditional questions, textual problems and doctrinal difficulties (Chapters One, Two and Three); and since we have discussed the many reservations, objections and criticisms which Plotinus brought against the Aristotelian categories (Chapters Four and Five), it will not be difficult to identify the points on which the two philosophers agree or disagree regarding this problem and to suggest an explanation of their differences.

a. Points on Which the Two Philosophers Differ

Regarding Aristotle's doctrine of categories, the points on which Plotinus and Porphyry disagree are many and, in terms of importance,

¹ The question "why" is much more difficult to answer than the question "how" the two philosophers differ. The latter may shed some light on the former, but perhaps its answer involves other considerations which are not, strictly speaking, philosophical.

varied. For convenience they may be arranged under three headings as follows:

- (1) Points relating to the fact that Porphyry is the author of commentaries on the *Categories*, while Plotinus is a critic of the theory of categories as such;
- (2) Points relating to particular views held by each philosopher regarding each of the ten Aristotelian categories;
- (3) Points relating to the fact that, unlike Plotinus, Porphyry approaches the categories with a more open mind.²

(1) The Commentator versus the Critic

The fact that Porphyry wrote scholarly commentaries on the *Categories* places him on a different level than Plotinus who, in his treatise *On the Genera of Being*, considers the Aristotelian doctrine of categories as an alternative solution to the perennial problem of the appropriate "genera of Being."³ In this respect, at least three points of difference are notable.

First, whereas Plotinus based his criticism on the tacit presupposition that Aristotle's categories were intended to function as "genera of Being," Porphyry clearly considered the strictly ontological approach to the categories as one-sided.⁴ As we saw, he advanced a new interpretive formula in which he tried to encompass all the basic elements of the three previously proposed alternative interpretations of the categories.⁵ In Porphyry's view the Aristotelian categories are neither about *ὄντα*, nor about *νοήματα*, nor about *φωναί* exclusively. Rather, they are about significant articulate sounds (*φωναί σημαντικαί*) which signify things (*πράγματα*) by way of signifying concepts (*νοήματα*).⁶

Second, for those philosophers and critics, like Plotinus, who had accepted the ontological interpretation of the doctrine of categories, the suitable title of the treatise would be either *On the Ten Genera* or *On the*

² It is probable that Porphyry's favorable attitude towards Aristotle was extended beyond the theory of categories to encompass other Aristotelian doctrines as expounded in the *Organon*, *Ethics*, *Physics*, and *Metaphysics*. On all these treatises Porphyry had written commentaries which are lost, as was pointed out in the Introduction.

³ The other proposed solutions of this problem were the Stoic, the Platonic and the Plotinian, not to mention the various Presocratic proposals for which see Chapter Four, section 2.

⁴ The other two one-sided interpretations of the categories were identified (in Chapter One, section 4) as the strictly grammatical and the strictly logical interpretations.

⁵ For this reason Porphyry's interpretation was called "the inclusive interpretation" (*Ibid.*).

⁶ The ontological status of the signified *ὄντα* or *πράγματα* is left an open question in both the extant commentary (p. 75) and the opening paragraph of *Isagoge*. Porphyry regarded it as too deep a subject for the comprehension of young students for whom these works were written.

Genera of Being.⁷ It is true that Plotinus, who was not a commentator, does not discuss the traditional question of the correct title of the treatise.⁸ But Porphyry did consider this question important, discussed it at length and specifically rejected the above-mentioned titles of the treatise as incorrect. He ably defended the title *Κατηγορίαι* as the only correct and acceptable title.⁹

Third, in his role as a commentator, Porphyry had to discuss such questions as those which relate to the order of the categories, the division of the treatise into parts, its purpose and its author all of which are, quite understandably, absent from the *Enneads*. Besides, the commentator had to debate some controversial issues and to argue in favor of a particular version of certain passages in order to avoid misinterpretations. He had to explain the difficulties and defend specific doctrines of the treatise, while Plotinus, at times, gives the impression that he intended to do the exact opposite, that is, expose any possible weaknesses.¹⁰

(2) Each Category Criticized by Plotinus and Defended by Porphyry

Before I come to examine the particular points on which the two philosophers disagree with regard to each of the ten Aristotelian categories, it will be useful to recall here the following facts. First, it is the case that Plotinus' criticism of Aristotle's categories consists of two parts. In the first part (i.e. VI. 1.), the entire set of Aristotle's categories, like the Stoic set, is rejected on the grounds that these categories can be neither "genera of Being" nor "primary genera" which is the subject matter of his elaborate treatise entitled, *On the Genera of Being*. For Plotinus, the Aristotelian categories as well as the Stoic categories are irrelevant and inapplicable to the realm of "True Being," to which only Plato's five *maxima genera* can apply meaningfully and adequately.¹¹ In the second part (i.e. VI. 3.), Plotinus proposed a fivefold list of "genera"

⁷ See PAC, pp. 55-57; and SAC, p. 16, 17.

⁸ Plotinus did not write a commentary on the *Categories*, or on anything else for that matter, but he did discuss and criticize the ontological implications of Aristotle's categorial doctrine from a purely Platonic point of view, as he understood Platonism.

⁹ Porphyry's most important reference to other Aristotelian treatises in his extant commentary is perhaps the one found on page 141, where he explains Aristotle's omission of the last six categories from his discussion in the *Categories* as justifiable, on the grounds that they had been treated in other works, such as *Physics*, *Metaphysics*, and *De Generatione et Corruptione*.

¹⁰ E.g. VI. 1. 14, 13-18 and VI. 3. 19, 25-33.

¹¹ This line of criticism may be considered as an implication of the Platonic-Plotinian ontological dichotomy between the realm of real Being (*ὄντως ὄν*, τὸ ὄν) and the realm of mere becoming (*ὄν πως*, γιγνόμενον), e.g., see *Timaeus* 28a, the *locus classicus* in this regard.

for the realm of becoming. But these are only homonymously called "genera" and it would be better to call them categories.¹²

Second, both the Plotinian rejection and the Plotinian reduction of Aristotle's categories are completely absent from the Porphyrian commentary but not surprisingly so. It is not difficult to understand why the question of accepting or rejecting Aristotle's categories does not arise for Plotinus' favorite student. He knew very well that Plotinus himself had come a long way from VI. 1. to VI. 3., by modifying his strong, refutative stand and by accepting in the end a reduced and somehow qualified list of "genera" for the sensible world.¹³ Besides, to Porphyry, who was critical of the strict ontological interpretation of Aristotle's categories, Plotinus' argumentation against them appeared questionable. For, on the assumption that the Aristotelian categories were meant to be only instrumental for the organization of human experience of the sensible world, any criticism which would take them outside of this frame of reference becomes automatically groundless. In this respect, the disagreement between the two philosophers comes to the dilemma of choosing between a reduced list and a complete list of Aristotle's categories. As we saw, and I hope that the point will become clearer from the comparison which is to follow, Plotinus was inclined towards the first alternative in deference to Plato, while Porphyry favored the second alternative, since he had found another way to harmonize Platonism and Aristotelianism.

Third, in Plotinus' list, a Platonic element is to be found, namely *κίνησις*, which is not considered by Porphyry as deserving the status of a separate category. Blending Platonism and Aristotelianism in this manner was not acceptable to him. His own strategy makes use of the following methods: (a) By avoiding the points on which the two philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, may clash; (b) by stressing the points on which they are apparently in agreement; (c) by drawing the appropriate distinctions; (d) by assigning to each philosopher different operational regions (the sensible world to Aristotle and the intelligible world to Plato); and (e) by insisting on the principle of interpreting Aristotle by Aristotle and Plato by Plato, Porphyry succeeded (if not philosophically at least diplomatically) in ending a long controversy and in initiating a new tradition which is both Neoplatonic and Neoaristotelian, as the subsequent history of western philosophy clearly indicates.

¹² See VI. 1. 1, 17-18 and the discussion in Chapter Five.

¹³ Was Porphyry's questioning responsible in any way for Plotinus' two different treatments of the categories in VI. 3. and in VI. 1.? Because of insufficient evidence this intriguing question cannot be answered. My own guess is that it probably was.

With this in mind, we may now proceed to consider the particular points of disagreement between Plotinus and Porphyry on each category. Beginning with οὐσία, we recall that Aristotle (1) in the *Categories* draws the distinction between primary and secondary substances and asserts the primacy of the individual substance;¹⁴ (2) in the *Metaphysics* and elsewhere¹⁵ he uses the same term, οὐσία, to denote form, matter and the composite of these two; (3) he also refers to οὐσία as a "genus of being."¹⁶

In his criticism of Aristotle's οὐσία, Plotinus argues that, with regard to (3), sensible substance cannot be a "genus of Being" because the realm of real Being is distinguished from the realm of becoming which is its mere εἰκὼν. In addition, since there is not a common genus to encompass these two ontologically distinct realms, only homonymously is it possible for οὐσία αἰσθητῇ to be called οὐσία.¹⁷ With regard to (2), the fact that the different entities do not share in substantiality equally (as the species of a given genus must do) indicates that οὐσία cannot be their "genus" either. Plotinus also rejects (1) on the ground that ὄντα νοητὰ have priority over ὄντα αἰσθητά.¹⁸ He never tires of using the analogy of Socrates' priority to his portrait.¹⁹

When we turn to Porphyry's *Commentary*, we find that his position on these issues is noticeably different from Plotinus'. First of all, he observes that by οὐσία Aristotle, in the *Categories*, means "composite sensible substance."²⁰ So Plotinus' criticism of (2) becomes irrelevant. Secondly, according to Porphyry, it would also be irrelevant to criticize Aristotle's categories on the basis that they cannot function as "genera of Being." They simply were not intended for such a supreme role; for they are not about ὄντα primarily, but about φωναὶ σημαντικαί. Since they signify, in a very generic way, things of the sensible world, it is quite understandable, in Porphyry's view, that Aristotle considered as "primary substances" the sensible individual substances (1). But, Porphyry contends, the sensible substances are not primary in every sense.²¹ From another point of view, οὐσαὶ νοηταὶ (which are not identified with species

¹⁴ *Categories* 2a 11-19.

¹⁵ E.g. *De Anima* 412a 6.

¹⁶ *Physics* 189b 23 and elsewhere.

¹⁷ Plotinus' characterizations of the sensible substance in the treatise under consideration are the following: οὐσία λεγομένη, γένεσις, οἷον οὐσία, all of which point to its inferiority in comparison to the real substance of the intelligible being, on which it is dependent.

¹⁸ In VI. 3. 5. Plotinus discusses this issue in detail. See also V. 9. *passim*.

¹⁹ E.g. in VI. 2. 2, 23-25 Plotinus finds it γελοῖον (laughable) to put Socrates and his εἰκὼν under one and the same genus as if they were ontologically equal.

²⁰ PAC, p. 88, 14-22.

²¹ They are not, for instance, "by nature prior." On this, see also Chapter Three.

and genera) would appear to be prior to individuals.²² In this way Porphyry, unlike Plotinus, tried to bring together the Platonists and the Peripatetics. Since his *Commentaria* on *Metaphysics*, *Physics* and the logical treatises are not extant, it is not easy to tell what his precise position was with regard to (3). What is evident from his extant *Commentary* is his effort to keep the *Categories* separate from *Metaphysics* which would allow him to avoid Plotinus' criticism and, by so doing, to pave the way towards the desirable conciliation of Aristotle and Plato.²³

With regard to the category of quantity, we saw that Porphyry in the *Commentary* accepted and commented favorably on (1) all seven kinds of ποσά (as distinguished by Aristotle in *Categories* and classified into discrete and continuous qualities), and (2) their peculiar characteristics, especially the characteristic that quantities do not receive contraries.²⁴ Plotinus, on the other hand, disagrees with both Porphyry and Aristotle on these doctrines. For him, the distinction between discrete and continuous quantities is questionable.²⁵ Only numbers are true ποσά (magnitudes become quantified only when measured),²⁶ while time (χρόνος), place (τόπος) and speech (λόγος) are not regarded as quantities at all.²⁷ Plotinus considers time and place as παρακολουθήματα (consequents) of motion and sensible substance respectively.²⁸ Both, therefore, are reducible to relatives and so are two other Aristotelian categories related to them, that is, πού and ποτέ.²⁹

We may recall that Porphyry accepted these two categories as distinct and necessary, though he admitted that they are ἐπιγινόμενα (that is, they presuppose items in other categories such as substance and quantity).³⁰ He also took great pains to defend Aristotle's thesis that "a quantity has no contrary."³¹ He tested all kinds of quantity one by one and concluded that what appear as contrary quantities (e.g. "much and little," "many

²² About Porphyry's effort to strike a middle position on this matter, see Chapter Three, section 1, subsection (a).

²³ It seems that Porphyry's ultimate set goal was to achieve a harmonious synthesis of Platonism and Aristotelianism. In this sense, he can be regarded as an Aristotelian Neoplatonist in a much stronger sense than Plotinus who, in Porphyry's view (*Vita*, 4), initiated the process.

²⁴ See Chapter Three, section 2, subsection (b).

²⁵ VI. 1. 4, 5-8.

²⁶ *Ibid.* 10-19, but compare it to VI. 3. 11, 1-5, where this thesis is somewhat modified.

²⁷ See Chapter Five, section 3, subsection (b).

²⁸ VI. 3. 3, 23-25.

²⁹ *Ibid.* 28-29.

³⁰ PAC, p. 142, 6-14. ἐπισυνίσταται is another term used in this connection. The emphasis in this term as in the ἐπιγινόμενον is on the ἐπί. Porphyry explains, "τόπου γὰρ καὶ χρόνου μὴ ὄντος, ἅπερ ἐστὶ ποσά, οὐδὲ τὸ πού [sic in Busse's writing; the enclitic πού would seem preferable, as Minio-Paluello suggests] οὐδὲ τὸ ποτέ ἂν εἴη."

³¹ PAC, pp. 107-110.

and few," "small and large") are not quantities, but cases of relatives as Aristotle had maintained.³² Τόπος is the kind of ποσόν which would seem most likely to have contraries because people speak of "up" and "down" as contrary places. But Porphyry had argued that "there is not *up* and *down per se*."³³ So they too must be relatives. Plotinus had an additional reason not to consider "up" and "down" as contrary quantities. For him, place was not a quantity. He also argues that in some cases "great" and "small" are used instead of "greater" and "smaller" which, as comparatives, express relations. However, Plotinus, unlike Aristotle and Porphyry, thinks that "Greatness" and "Smallness" are contrary Forms and so are "great" and "small" which, Platonically speaking, participate in these Forms.³⁴ In this light, then, Plotinus appears very Platonic in contrast to Aristotle and Porphyry.

With regard to the category of πρὸς τι, it may be observed that Porphyry comments favorably and defends: (1) the relatively privileged position (third in order) of this category; (2) the different types of relatives; (3) their Aristotelian definition; (4) their characteristics; and (5) the thesis that "no substance is a relative."³⁵ Now Plotinus either completely disagrees or at least raises objections on each of these theses. With regard to (1), we recall, he either considers relation broadly and places it second, immediately after substance in the list of categories, or else he considers it narrowly and puts it at the end (fifth) on his list of "genera" of becoming.³⁶ As for (2), he prefers the "ancient" (i.e. Platonic) division over the Aristotelian which Porphyry follows.³⁷ With regard to (3), the definition also must be modified somehow.³⁸ As for (4), their characteristic is accepted but not without some reservations.³⁹ It is with regard to (5) that Plotinus sharply disagrees with Aristotle. Contrary to Aristotle, Plotinus thinks that in some sense substance can be considered as relative.⁴⁰ From a Plotinian point of view, this is not to be considered a great loss or degradation of the first category, which is supposed to be independent and self-subsisting, for the simple reason that the sensible substance here below is but the "reflection" and "shadow" of the authentic Substance up "There."⁴¹

³² *Categories*, Chapter Six.

³³ PAC, p. 107, 8-9.

³⁴ See note No. 27 above.

³⁵ PAC, pp. 111-126.

³⁶ Consider VI. 3. 3. and contrast it to VI. 3. 28.

³⁷ VI. 3. 28, 8-11.

³⁸ See Chapter Four, section 3, subsection (c).

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ VI. 3. 28, 4-8. Porphyry, on the other hand, tried to find a *media via* on this issue, as we saw in Chapter Three.

⁴¹ VI. 3. 8, 30-37.

To pass to the fourth Aristotelian category, quality and *qualia*, it may be recalled that Plotinus, in VI. 1. 10., questioned whether qualities and *qualia* can be put in the same category, though, in VI. 3. 15., he accepted that this can be done with some qualification.⁴² As for the four kinds of qualities, on which Porphyry's comments are favorable, Plotinus seems to question their "common ground," as we have seen. Unlike Porphyry who, at least in the extant commentary, referred very rarely to other Aristotelian treatises, Plotinus utilized a basic distinction drawn in *Metaphysics* only to ingeniously reverse Aristotle's thesis. Thus, what Aristotle had called "qualities in the truest sense" are, for Plotinus, qualities only *ὁμωνύμως*.⁴³ Also, Plotinus, unlike Porphyry, objected that "permanence," as a criterion for distinguishing between habits and dispositions, is clearly insufficient.⁴⁴ And finally he proposed a new division of qualities according to whether they pertain to the body or the soul.⁴⁵

With regard to the remaining six categories, it may be noted in general (due to the incompleteness of the commentary, we do not have the details) that Porphyry accepted all of them,⁴⁶ while Plotinus either reduced them to other more basic categories or subsumed them under the new and non-Aristotelian category of *κίνησις*.⁴⁷ For instance, it is evident from the extant *Commentary*⁴⁸ that Porphyry accepted *ποιεῖν* and *πάσχειν* as distinct categories, while he considered *κίνησις* as an accidental quantity.⁴⁹ Plotinus, on the contrary, proposed that *κίνησις* be considered as a category of the sensible world having as its species all different kinds of motions. For him, *ποιεῖν* and *πάσχειν* become two aspects of one and the same activity, that is, *κίνησις*, which can replace them without any loss.⁵⁰ Plotinus' presupposition here is that every activity implies passivity which, as Simplicius has pointed out, is not in accord with Peripatetic principles.⁵¹ Since Simplicius does not claim originality for this or any other thesis in his *Commentary* on the *Categories*, it is probable that he follows Porphyry on this as in so many other points.⁵²

⁴² In this regard, compare VI. 1. 10. and VI. 3. 19.

⁴³ See Chapter Four, section 3, subsection (d).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ PAC, pp. 141-142.

⁴⁷ VI. 1. 13-14; and VI. 3. 28.

⁴⁸ PAC, pp. 141-142.

⁴⁹ PAC, pp. 105-106.

⁵⁰ See Chapter Four, section 3, subsection (e), and Chapter Five, section 3, subsection (d).

⁵¹ SAC, pp. 301-302.

⁵² At the very beginning of his commentary Simplicius acknowledged his debt to Porphyry and Iamblichus who, he says, followed Porphyry "word for word" (*ἐπ' αὐτῆς τῆς λέξεως κατακολουθῶν*), SAC, p. 2, 10-11.

For Plotinus, the Aristotelian categories *ποῦ* and *ποτέ* are reducible, respectively, to place and time. These two, not being quantities (as Aristotle had thought) are in turn reducible to relations, in Plotinus' view. As we saw, they are the consequents of extended bodies and motion respectively. In addition to that, Plotinus claims that in these cases, as in the case of *κεῖσθαι* and *ἔχειν*, we are not dealing with *ἀπλᾶ* (simples). In "being positioned thus or so," for example, we have something (a being) placed in some place in a certain way.⁵³ Plotinus did not see how all this was supposed to be *ἄνευ συμπλοκῆς λεγόμενον*. Yet, Aristotle's categorial theory allegedly was about such, linguistically and ontologically, simple uncombined entities.⁵⁴

Since Porphyry's extant *Commentary* stops abruptly, it cannot be determined how he defended his acceptance of these two "anthropocentric categories," as they have been characterized. However, from the little that he says on this matter it may be safely inferred that Porphyry accepted the category of *κεῖσθαι*. He thought that one should not confuse, as Plotinus presumably did, this category with *θέσις* (position) which is considered as relative even by Aristotle.⁵⁵ As to the *ποῦ* and *ποτέ*, they are called *ἐπιγινόμενα* (derivative, coming after), in contrast to other categories which are *προηγούμενα* (primary, coming first).⁵⁶ Evidently it was on this basis that subsequent commentators developed an explanation of the last six Aristotelian categories which they considered as the product of *συνδυασμός* (combination) of the other categories.⁵⁷

The point is that in each of the ten Aristotelian categories, which Porphyry accepted and defended in his *Commentary*, Plotinus had some (few or many) objections. That is to say, even with regard to the sensible realm of becoming, Plotinus found that Aristotle's categories cannot adequately apply. He tried to question particular doctrines related to each of the categories and, in order to make them acceptable, he had to modify them always with an eye to principles of pure Platonism.

(3) *Pro* Aristotle and *contra* Aristotle

There are some points of disagreement between Plotinus and Porphyry which can be regarded as a result of the fact that the one took a critical position, while the other took a favorable position, towards Aristotle's doctrine of categories.

⁵³ VI. 1. 23-24, and the reference in note No. 50 above.

⁵⁴ Aristotle introduced the ten categories, we recall, as "*ἄνευ συμπλοκῆς λεγόμενα*" (1b 25).

⁵⁵ PAC, pp. 141-142.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ AAC, pp. 92-93; EAC, pp. 339-341; PhAC, pp. 163-165; SAC, pp. 295-298.

First, it is clear from our exposition that Porphyry always seeks reasons to support Aristotelian theses or to answer objections on particular doctrines raised by the Platonists and other critics. On the contrary, Plotinus always looks for grounds to refute Aristotle's arguments and destroy or minimize the importance of his distinctions and basic doctrines. He criticizes Aristotle's categories from the ontological presuppositions of pure Platonism which he believes that he has successfully incorporated in his own philosophical system. Unlike Plotinus who emphasizes the points of disagreement between Platonism and Aristotelianism, Porphyry pays more attention to their points of agreement. Even in those cases in which the commentator cannot accept Aristotle's views (and this is very rare) he tries to find a way to reconcile and harmonize the opposite views. As an example, we may take the problem of priority between primary and secondary substances or (to put it in a less misleading way) between individuals and universals. As we saw, Porphyry tried to reconcile the Platonic and the Peripatetic positions by utilizing the distinction between φύσει πρότερον and αἰσθήσει πρότερον.

Second, in his three tracts Plotinus never referred to Aristotle by name, though he did so with regard to Plato. In fact, Plato is the only name which appears frequently in this part of the *Enneads* (especially, VI. 2.) always accompanied by respectful and favorable comments.⁵⁸ The same can be said with regard to Aristotle in Porphyry's *Commentary*. As a good scholar and teacher, the commentator tries to present the author's views to the students clearly, positively and impartially. He purposely avoids the very deep or controversial issues, at least in the extant and elementary commentary. His position seems to have been that, if there is a way to prove that Plato and Aristotle are essentially in agreement (and he thought that he could do that, as his treatise on the *Concordia* indicates), it would be pointless to engage in petty eristic by trying to turn one great philosopher against the other for no apparent good reason and, thus, provide the enemies of philosophy with extra weapons for their attack.

Third, through the many pages of Plotinus' criticism, one gets the impression that they are inspired, at times, by a polemical and inimical spirit which is reminiscent of Aristotle's critique of the Academics in many of his treatises, especially *Metaphysics*. One cannot fail to see, hidden behind Plotinus' refutations, the long anti-Aristotelian tradition of the Platonic Schools as exemplified by Eudorus, Atticus, Lucius and Nicostratus to mention only the better known.⁵⁹ When Plotinus cannot

⁵⁸ The names of Aristotle, Heraclitus, Empedocles, and Parmenides are mentioned only a few times in other parts of the *Enneads*.

⁵⁹ SAC, pp. 1-2; and *Vita Plotini* 14.

reject out of hand an Aristotelian doctrine, he tries to either minimize its usefulness or modify it which, in this context, means to Platonize it before he can accept it. The exact opposite of this is true with regard to Porphyry's *Commentary*. He seems to be prepared to accept as much from Aristotle as possible. His ideal is a final harmonious synthesis of Plato and Aristotle. Insofar as the *Metaphysics* is concerned, he believed (*Vita* 14) that Plotinus had gone a long way in that direction. He felt that he had to do the same with regard to *Organon*, beginning with the *Categories*. If the applicability of Aristotle's categorial doctrine be restricted to this sensible realm, Porphyry seems to suggest, then the treatise can be incorporated in the Neoplatonic *curriculum* with profit. As Porphyry sees it, it would be unwise for the lovers of wisdom to consider Plato and Aristotle as enemies or irreconcilable opponents. Such an attitude, he thought, could be damaging and dangerous, especially at this critical time when multiple barbarian hordes were attacking the civilized Graeco-Roman world from outside and from within.⁶⁰

b. The Common Background

If we recall that Porphyry was Plotinus' favorite disciple, who had great respect and admiration for the great philosopher, it will not be difficult to understand that, in spite of all the differences and disagreements regarding the Aristotelian doctrine of categories, as stated above, the two philosophers shared in the following fundamental doctrines.

There is no doubt that the ontological distinction between the realm of real Being and the realm of mere becoming was of great philosophical importance for Platonism and Neoplatonism. Insofar as Plotinus is concerned, we have seen that this distinction served as a basis for his criticisms against Aristotle's categories which were purported to serve as "genera of Being." Using as a starting point the Platonic doctrine that reality is divided into two ontologically distinct realms, Plotinus found it easy to demonstrate that Aristotle's categories cannot be the "primary genera of Being," since their frame of reference is this sensible universe, which for all genuine Platonists can be nothing more than a mere reflection of the "Other." He stated, repeatedly, that the relation between the two realms is analogous to the relation between a living being and its pic-

⁶⁰ In the second half of the third century A.D., various invading barbarians threatened to destroy (and finally succeeded in destroying) the Greco-Roman empire from outside, while from within the advance of the new barbaric faith (as Porphyry labeled the Christian religion of his time) was becoming a serious threat to the *status quo*. According to Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica*, IV 19, 7, Porphyry had described Origen's conversion thus: "Ὁριγένης δὲ Ἕλληνα ἐν Ἑλλήσιν παιδευθεὶς λόγοις, πρὸς τὸ βάρβαρον ἐξώκειλεν τόλμημα".

ture. The external similarity between a real being and its 'image' may tempt us to give the same name to both. So we may call them both 'animal' or 'man.' But if we are pressed to give a reasoned account of each of them, then we can see that the same name covers two different realities as Aristotle said. That is to say, homonymy is involved in our discourse. The same relation holds, for Plotinus, between the so-called ὄντα of the sensible realm and their Platonic archetypes or Ideas which are ὄντως ὄντα.

As for Porphyry, he had also accepted this doctrine of the two ontological realms. Although in his extant elementary commentary no allusions to this doctrine are to be found, his treatise, Ἀφορμαὶ πρὸς τὰ νοητά, is quite explicit on this point.⁶¹ Both Plotinus and Porphyry seem to agree that Aristotle's categories are not applicable to what they refer to as κόσμος νοητός. Both accept that the entities of that supreme realm are more real than the so-called beings of κόσμος αἰσθητός, from which the soul of the real philosopher must liberate itself.⁶² But, while Plotinus considers the inapplicability of Aristotle's categories to the realm of Being as a serious defect of the doctrine and criticizes Aristotle for that, Porphyry thinks that the problem can be solved in another way. He seems to suggest that, insofar as this sensible world is concerned, Aristotle's categories are applicable and useful. Besides, in his view, the Aristotelian categories were not intended to account for the intelligible world and, if they are inapplicable to it, as Plotinus had shown, no real harm is done. The point is that, instead of criticizing Aristotle from a Platonic point of view and *vice versa*, Porphyry found it wiser to assign to each philosopher a different region.⁶³ This certainly helped his harmonizing effort, but he must have had more compelling reasons for his grand synthesis of Platonic and Aristotelian doctrines.⁶⁴

It would also be incorrect to assume that Plotinus did not feel Aristotle's influence or that he did not appropriate certain Aristotelian doctrines, since we have Porphyry's testimony that the opposite of this is the case.⁶⁵ Apart from that, VI. 3. which we discussed in detail, shows

⁶¹ This, like all the other extant treatises except for the *Isagoge* and *De antro*, is preserved in an incomplete form, though it is difficult to tell how much of it is missing. The Ἀφορμαὶ reads as a summary or a commentary on the *Enneads* regarding the relation between the corporeal and the incorporeal, the relation between *Soul* and *Intellect*, the classification of the virtues and so forth.

⁶² See, for instance, O'Meara [566], Lloyd (in Armstrong) [18], pp. 287-293, and Harris [136], p. 9.

⁶³ This formula became popular during the Middle Ages. See Maioli, [194], p.¹².

⁶⁴ For Porphyry's extensive commentary work see the relevant references in the Introduction.

⁶⁵ "Καταπεπύκνωται δὲ καὶ ἡ Μετὰ τὰ φυσικὰ τοῦ Ἀριστοτέλους πραγματεία" (*Vita* 14, 5-7). E. Hoffman went so far, in this direction, as to claim that "Neoplatonism should be called 'Neo-Aristotelianism'" (quoted by Harris [136], p. 3).

clearly that Plotinus modified his strong opposition towards Aristotle's categorial doctrine which he had expressed in VI. 1. With regard to the sensible world Plotinus, like Porphyry, thought that Aristotle's categories could be useful. But, unlike Porphyry, he accepted the Aristotelian categories under three important conditions: (1) that they be reduced in number (it was a drastic fifty per cent reduction, in fact); (2) that they be modified somewhat (it was a serious Platonic modification, in fact); and (3) that they be understood (ontologically speaking) as being used only homonymously.

Thus, in correspondence to the five authentic "genera of Being," Plotinus proposed five "genera" or, rather, categories for the sensible world of becoming. His list comprises the first four or cardinal Aristotelian categories and the Plotinian category of *κίνησις*. In Plotinus' view, they are sufficient to account for the sensible and image-like world.

In this connection, it may be noted that Porphyry in his *Isagoge* developed a theory of the five *φωναὶ* or *κατηγορούμενα* (predicables) which, he contended, can encompass all the significant predicates of a given subject except for the proper names. According to this theory, any predicate which is predicated of more than one thing (or being or entity), can be one of the following: genus, species, *differentia*, property or accident.⁶⁶ Modern scholars are divided on the issue whether *Isagoge* is an introduction to *Categories* or to *Topics*.⁶⁷ In my opinion, the treatise incorporates materials from both Aristotelian treatises: the *Topics* (as the definitions of the five *voces* clearly shows) and the *Categories* (as a comparison between the *Commentary* and the *Isagoge* clearly indicates). In this light, Porphyry's treatise can be viewed as an attempt to repeat, with regard to Aristotle's *Organon* (especially, *Topics* and *Categories*), what Plotinus had done with regard to *Metaphysics*. It was intended as an introduction not to any particular treatise, but to philosophy in general.⁶⁸

What is important to emphasize here is that in Plotinus' doctrine of the five "genera" of becoming the Aristotelian realism, as expressed in his categorial doctrine with its emphasis on the particular sensible substance, tended to become a "strange" version of Neoplatonic nominalism.⁶⁹ I am fully aware of the complexity of the problem of universals, the origin of which goes back to Porphyry, and I do not

⁶⁶ *Isagoge*, p. 1, 1-9.

⁶⁷ On this problem, Moody [210], pp. 66-117; Ross [277], p. 57; Tricot [327], pp. 5-8; W. Kneale and M. Kneale [168], 187; and my paper [438].

⁶⁸ At least that was the consensus of the Greek commentators and, as I have pointed out in my paper [438], there is no compelling reason to doubt its accuracy.

⁶⁹ On this see the excellent studies of Lloyd [530], Rutten [281], pp. 9-10 and Wurm's criticism of it [360], pp. 134-138.

presumptuously intend to solve or even discuss it in the closing section of my study.⁷⁰

Furthermore, that Porphyry was influenced deeply by the great Platonists who taught him in Athens (Longinus, for instance) and in Rome (Plotinus) is an undeniable historical fact. In this respect, the claim that Porphyry was the popularizer of Plotinus (combined with the fact that most of his voluminous work consists of *Commentaria*) appears to be reasonable. Yet, it would be a mistake to suppose that Porphyry was merely Plotinus' devoted disciple and nothing more. It seems that the years which Porphyry spent in Athens near Longinus not only helped him cultivate his Greek style but also shaped his philosophical outlook to a certain degree. That this philosophical outlook, which Porphyry acquired in the School of Longinus in Athens, had as its constitutive element a version of Platonism quite different from the Plotinian version, we have his own testimony (*Vita* 19). It was in all probability during his residence in Athens when he formed the conviction that Plato (in Longinus' version) and Aristotle were not so different philosophically as the School antagonisms had made them look.

2. *Nature and Importance of Their Disagreement*

If my analysis of Plotinus' attack and Porphyry's defense of Aristotle's doctrine of categories is correct, then by way of summary the following critical remarks may be made. First, the problem of Aristotle's categories, as faced by the Neoplatonic philosophers (at Plotinus' school in Rome in the second half of the third century A. D.), was solved in two different ways. It appears that there were two tendencies within the school, represented by two groups which we may call, for the sake of discussion, the conservative group (led by Plotinus) and the progressive group (centered around Porphyry).⁷¹

Following a long Platonic tradition, the first group (exemplified by Plotinus) had many reservations and objections regarding the Peripatetic philosophy, especially Aristotle's doctrine of categories. They were aware of the fact that Aristotle's ontology, to which his theory of categories corresponds, differs from the Platonic ontology as expressed in the doctrine

⁷⁰ See Aaron [1], pp. 1-17, and the opening paragraph of the *Isagoge* which was the source of the problem.

⁷¹ Whether or not Porphyry had any followers within Plotinus' circle while Plotinus was still alive, one cannot tell. It is clear, however, that such Neoplatonists as Iamblichus, Dexippus, Olympiodorus, and Simplicius (not to mention Ammonius, Elias and David who wrote favorable commentaries on the *Isagoge*) followed Porphyry's views on Aristotle's categories very closely.

of Ideas and the dichotomy of the cosmos into the sensible and intelligible realms. Consequently, they tried (a) to take from Aristotle's doctrines as little as possible and (b) to modify (i.e. Platonize) it as much as possible. Concretely, they believed that Aristotle's categories, if reduced and modified, may be useful for the so-called ὄντα of the sensible world, provided that we do not lose sight of the horrific homonymy involved in this unavoidably double talk about things as they are and as they appear to be.

In contrast, the second group (exemplified by Porphyry) thought that they could have both Plato and Aristotle. They felt that Aristotle's categories might be accepted as they are (without reduction or modification) under the condition that their applicability be restricted to the σύνθετα ὄντα of the sensible world. Accordingly, they tried to (a) take from Aristotle as much as possible and (b) to find a way to harmonize his doctrines with the Platonism of Plotinus. With regard to Aristotle's categories concretely, they formulated an exegesis according to which the categories are conceived neither as "primary genera," nor as "genera of Being," but simply as φωναὶ σημαντικαὶ (without being very precise as to the nature of the "signified").

Second, if Plotinus can be correctly characterized as the last representative of a long tradition of hostility between Platonists and Peripatetics, then Porphyry can be considered as the first representative of a new tendency within Neoplatonism. This new tendency saw Plato and Aristotle as having many doctrines in common. They were seen as being, essentially, in agreement and as differing only in the way they placed the emphasis. Thus, they could and should be harmonized. Porphyry's importance for the history of philosophy lies primarily in the fact that after him all Neoplatonic commentators accepted his views on this issue, as expressed in *Isagoge*, his *Commentaria* on the *Categories* and, one may reasonably guess, in the lost commentaries on other Aristotelian treatises. Since these two works were translated into Latin early⁷² and were among the few Aristotelian fragments known to the Western world for many centuries to come, they had considerable and disproportional influence.⁷³ Through Byzantine commentaries as well as Syrian and Arab translations the *Categories*, in its Porphyrian interpretation and always accompanied by the *Isagoge*, influenced the East no less than the West.⁷⁴

⁷² See Bidez [395] on the relation between Porphyry and Boethius, and Hadot [132], vol. I, for Porphyry's influence on Victorinus.

⁷³ In contrast to *Logica Nova*, the group of the three treatises, *Isagoge*, *Categories*, and *De Interpretatione*, constituted the *Logica Vetus*. See Sullivan [310], pp. 229-230.

⁷⁴ CAG IV, part 1, pp. xxxv-xlvi. Also Walzer [635].

Third, it is regrettable that Porphyry's systematic commentary on the *Categories*, as well as his extensive *Commentaries* on the *Enneads*, Plato's *Dialogues* and Aristotle's *Physics* and *Metaphysics* are lost. It is also unfortunate that his two treatises on Plato's and Aristotle's agreement are not extant. We cannot know how he conceived and how well he defended the synthesis of the two philosophies. From the success and influence which Porphyry's thesis had on the subsequent generations, it may be inferred that he had based it on sound arguments. It would not do to simply say that it was the assignment of different areas to each philosopher that helped Porphyry's reconciliatory efforts. *Aristoteles logicus* and *Plato theologus* may serve well as a motto, but it cannot hold up under scrutiny. For the question is that Aristotle had his "theology" which he calls πρώτη φιλοσοφία, and Plato had his "logic" which he calls διαλεκτική. However, the meager evidence from the extant *Commentary* as well as the *Isagoge* indicates that, in these works, Porphyry tried to avoid the difficult questions which might frustrate his conciliatory effort. He preferred not to touch upon the "very deep and difficult philosophical problems" for the sake of his students, he says.⁷⁵ What would happen when the students became mature philosophers was a different matter.

Fourth, it is beyond doubt that in many ways Porphyry appears to be more Aristotelian than his teacher, as our discussion has pointed out. His favorable attitude contrasts with Plotinus' unfavorable attitude, particularly, towards Aristotle's categories. But it is equally true that Porphyry is essentially a Neoplatonist who does not want to be unfaithful to Plotinus. What is interesting about him is that he believed that he could also be an Aristotelian. He wanted to go one step further in the direction which Plotinus had taken by incorporating much of the *Metaphysics* in the *Enneads*. Porphyry thought it important to repeat the effort with regard to *Categories*. It is this effort, in my view, which to a certain extent liberated Porphyry from Plotinus' influence and gave him a distinct position in the history of ideas as a contributor to the great Neoplatonic synthesis of Platonism and Aristotelianism. For Porphyry, Aristotle's theory of categories can be taken as a guide in exploring this sensible world of becoming, while Plato and Plotinus may be reserved for the journey to the Other World.

Fifth, the careful reading of the *Enneads* (VI. 1-3, in particular), in conjunction with the *Vita* and Porphyry's extant commentary and other fragmentary works, reveal to us two men who were very different in terms of temperament and training. On the one hand, we see Plotinus, the self-assured master, the mortal who has reached the state of "being

⁷⁵ The same reason is repeated in *Isagoge*, p. 1, and in the *Commentary*, p. 75.

Godlike," insofar as is possible to mortals. Had it not been for the persistence, of the people around him (*Vita* 4), he would not have bothered to write anything down, whereas he would have been faithful to his teacher, Ammonius who, like Socrates, did not write anything. On the other hand, we have Porphyry, the quick-minded, the constantly questioning student who is eager to learn as much as he can from the great teacher. The picture of Porphyry at the School of Plotinus is in many respects similar to that of young Aristotle at the Academy of Plato. Owing to his excellent training, Porphyry is also an accomplished stylist, a lover of wisdom as well as words, a literary critic, a historian of ideas, a religious reformer, and a propagandist of the cause of Hellenism. It cannot be accidental, that this man was solely responsible for both Plotinus' fame and Aristotle's glory for the subsequent thousand years after his death, in spite of their differences. That the *Enneads* are readable and ordered is due to the labor of Porphyry and his editorial talent. That parts of Aristotle's *Organon* survived in the West during the long Dark Ages, we also owe to Porphyry's ability to make them "simple and easy" for Boethius to understand and translate.

Sixth, given that Porphyry was distinguished as an anti-Christian writer no less than he was as a commentator; that the character of Christianity at his time was overwhelmingly otherworldly and eschatological; that the advance of the new faith was considerable at the end of the third century,⁷⁶ it would not seem unreasonable to suggest that his turn to Aristotle may be explained as: (a) an attempt to differentiate the pagan Platonism from the Christian Platonism which was emerging at that time (e.g. Origen); (b) an effort to unify all intellectual forces of the pagan world against the advance of irrationalism which, under the mask of a new faith, was undermining the Greco-Roman world from within; (c) a tactical movement which could provide him with the advantage of using the weapon of Aristotle's logic for his polemical purposes.⁷⁷

Seventh, Porphyry's efforts to bring together Plotinus and Longinus, to harmonize Plato and Aristotle, to see in the same light of understanding all Ancient Greek philosophers, from the Presocratics to the Stoics may give the impression that he was constantly on the side of Love and had ostracized Strife from his Empedoclean world.⁷⁸ Such an impression would be incorrect. For Porphyry had a target for his polemical

⁷⁶ The Edict of Milan was issued in 313 A.D., that is, within a decade of Porphyry's death.

⁷⁷ Later, even the Greek Church Fathers utilized Aristotle's logic in their efforts to combat heresies and formulate the Orthodox dogma. It is not surprising that John of Damascus incorporated both the *Categories* and the *Isagoge* in *Capita Philosophica*. Migne, PG, vol. 94, pp. 325ff.

⁷⁸ See Stiehl and Altheim [309], for the relation between Empedocles and Porphyry.

libels and that target was the Gnostic-Christian twin of his time. One is strongly tempted to see behind Porphyry's eagerness to harmonize all philosophical forces his acute awareness of the great threat which those quasi-oriental movements represented for the Hellenized world, as he understood it. For their appalling irrationalism, their social irresponsibility and their dogmatic intolerance, the pagan philosopher had only scorn and contempt. In the light of the urgency of the situation (*Hannibal ante portas*), as he perceived it, it would seem clear why Porphyry was unwilling to waste his time by concentrating on the subtle doctrinal differences between the Hellenic philosophers.⁷⁹

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, no matter how many objections one may have about Porphyry's tactics regarding Christian religiosity or Hellenic philosophy as represented by the grand triad, Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus; at least these things should be recognized and credited to him: scholastic aptitude, a sharp critical mind, philological acumen, exegetical talent, breadth of erudition, Socratic technique, lucidity of style, correct judgment and a readiness to understand and fairly represent the problems involved in the original texts of his commentaries. These traits are evident even in his extant commentary on the *Categories* which is elementary and preserved in an incomplete form.

Porphyry's commentary demonstrates that he knew his Aristotle very well. He also knew how to make him interesting to the students and attractive to the Neoplatonists. In this respect, he is rightly recognized as the originator of an Aristotelian and Neoplatonic tradition in philosophy which was destined to withstand the trial of time (until the Renaissance). Although he was a Platonist by training, in his extant commentary Porphyry appears to us as an accomplished Aristotelian commentator. It would not be hyperbole to say that he is as good a scholar as any Peripatetic of his time was.

This is not a small honor. For many centuries to many people, Porphyry was, as Simplicius said, "πάντων ἡμῖν τῶν καλῶν αἵτιος."⁸⁰

⁷⁹ It was left to the great theologians of the fourth century, the Cappadocian Fathers, to attempt what Porphyry and other pagan philosophers of the third century had thought impossible, that is, the reconciliation of Christianity and Hellenism. The long-lived Byzantium and the fact that even many Modern Greeks take pride in what they call their Hellenic-Christian Heritage attest to their success.

⁸⁰ SAC, p. 2, 5-6.

GLOSSARY OF GREEK TERMS

ἀγαθὸν (τό): good, the Good
ἄγνωστον: unknown, unknowable
ἀδιάφορον: undifferentiated
ἀδυναμία: impotence, incapability
ἀδύνατον: impossible
ἄθρως: at once, without degrees
αἰδῖος: eternal, everlasting
αἴσθησις: sensation, faculty of sensation
αἰσθητός: sensible, visible
αἰτία: cause
ἀκίνητος: immovable
ἄλλοιός: qualitatively different
ἄλλος: other, syn. ἕτερος
ἅμα: simultaneously
ἄμεσον: without intermediates
ἀμφιβολία: syntactical ambiguity, amphiboly
ἀναλογία: analogy
ἀναγκαῖον: necessary
ἀνδρεῖος (-α): brave, courageous, (courage)
ἄνευ: without
ἄνοδος: ascending; opp. κάθοδος
ἀνόμοιος: unlike, dissimilar
ἄπειρον: unlimited, indefinite, infinite
ἀπλᾶ: simple
ἀπόλυτος: absolute
ἀποτελεσματικός: constitutive
ἀρετή: virtue, excellence
ἀριθμός: number
ἀρχή: principle, starting point, source
ἄσώματον: incorporeal
ἄτομον: uncut, undivided, individual
ἄτοπον: absurd
αὐτός: the same
ἄυλος: immaterial
ἀφαίρεσις: abstraction
ἄχρονος: non-temporal

βασιλεύς: king

γένεσις: birth, becoming, process

γενικός: generic

γένος: genus, kind

γιγνόμενον: becoming

γραμματική: grammar

γραμματικός: grammarian

γραφή: picture, portrait

δεσμός: bond, knot, link

δεύτερος: second, secondary

διαλεκτική: dialectic

διαίρεσις: division, distinction

διανόημα: concept

διαφορά: difference, differentia

δόξα: opinion, belief

δύναμις: capacity, power, potency, potentiality

ἐγνωσμένον: known

ἔδρα: seat, base

εἰδοποιός: specific, specifying

εἶδος: species, type, form

εἶδωλον: idol, image

εἰκών: icon, reflection, image

εἶναι (τό): to be, existence

ἐκφορά: expression

ἐλαχίστη: minimal

ἕμμεσον: intermediate

ἓν: one, unity

ἐν: in

ἐν τῷ τί ἐστι: essentially

ἐν τῷ ὅποῖον τί ἐστι: qualitatively

ἐνέργεια: act, actuality

ἐντελέχεια: actualization, state of completion

ἐνυλος: form implanted in matter, embodied

ἐξάίρεσις: exception

ἐξήγησις: interpretation

ἔξις: habit, state

ἐπαγωγή: induction

ἐπιγινόμενον: coming after, derivative

ἐπιγραφή: title

ἐπίνοια: conception

ἕτερον: other, otherness

ἐτερόνυμον (-α): different in name
 ἔχειν: having

ζωή: life
 ζωγραφία: picture
 ζῷον: animal

θέσις: position, positing

ἰδέα: Idea, Form
 ἴδιον (-α): property, peculiar characteristic
 ἰνδαλμα: image
 ἰσοδυναμεῖν: to be equivalent

καθαυτό: separate, *per se*, absolute
 κάθοδος: descending
 καθολικός: universal
 καθόλου: generic, universal
 καί: and
 κατάχρησις: abuse
 κατηγορήμα: predicable, predicate
 κατηγορία: category, predicate, predication
 κατηγορούμενον: predicable
 κεῖσθαι: being in a position, being situated
 κεφάλαιον: part, summary
 κίνησις: motion
 κλῖμαξ: ladder, stairway
 κοινόν: common
 κοινότης: community
 κόσμος: order, cosmos, universe
 κρίσις: distinction, judgment
 κυρίως: mainly, strictly
 κύων: dog

λέγειν: to utter, to say
 λεγόμενον (-α): utterance, expression, that which is said or expressed
 λεκτόν: meaning
 λέξις: word
 λογική: logic
 λογικῶς: logically, in a logical manner
 λόγος: discourse, speech, proportion, reason

μέγεθος: size, magnitude
 μέγιστα (γένη): greatest, highest (genera)
 μερικός: particular
 μέρος: part
 μέσον: mean
 μεσότης: mean, mean state
 μόριον (ἄνά): part, partly, one at a time
 μορφή: form, external shape
 μεταβολή: change
 μεταφορά: metaphor
 μετασχηματισμός: reformation, change of the shape
 μετοχή: participation
 μίγμα: mixture
 μίμημα: copy, ectype
 μή: not, non

νόημα: concept
 νοητός: intelligible
 νοῦς: intellect

οἰκείως: properly
 ὅλον: whole; opp. parts
 ὁμοιότης: similarity
 ὅμοιος: similar, alike
 ὁμωνυμία: homonymy, equivocation
 ὁμώνυμον (-α): homonymous (things)
 ὄν (ὄντα): entity, being, (beings)
 ὄνομα: name
 ὀνοματοποιεῖν: giving names
 ὄντως: really
 ὀρισμός: definite account, definition
 ὀριστικός: definitive
 ὄρος: limit, boundary, definition
 οὐδέν: none, nothing
 οὐσία: substance
 οὐσιώδης: substantial, essential

παντελῶς: completely
 παραβολή: comparison
 παράθεσις: juxtaposition
 παρακολούθημα: consequent, concomitant
 παραστατικός: representative
 παραφυάς: offshoot

παρώνυμον (-α): paronymous, derivative
 πᾶς: every
 πάσχειν (τό): passion, being acted upon
 περί: on, about
 πλεοναχῶς: in many ways
 πολλά: many
 πολλαχῶς λέγεται: is said in many ways
 πολυώνυμον (-α): (thing/s) with many names
 ποιεῖν: to act, acting, action
 ποίησις: acting, making
 ποιός: quale, qualified
 ποιότης: quality, qualification
 ποσόν: quantity
 ποτέ: at some time, when
 ποῦ, πού: in what place, where, somewhere
 πρὸς: to, towards, in relation to
 πρὸς τι (τά): relative, relatives, the category of relation
 πῦρ: fire
 πῶς, πώς: how, somehow

σημαίνειν: signify
 σημαντικός: significant
 σκοπός: intention, purpose
 στάσις: stability, rest
 στέρησις: privation
 συμβεβηχός: accident, attribute
 συμπλοκή: combination, conjunction
 συμφέρειν: to put together
 συμφόρησις: coming together, conglomeration
 συναμφότερον: composite
 σύνθετον: compound
 συναναιρεῖν: to entail canceling
 συνώνυμον (-α): synonymous, synonym
 συστατικός: constitutive
 σχέσις: relation
 σχῆμα: shape, figure, scheme
 σῶμα: body

ταὐτός: the same
 τάξις: order
 τέλειος: complete, perfect
 τέχνη: art, craft, skill

τί, τι: what, something

τόδε τι: this, individual

τόπος: place, space

τρόπος: way, trope

τύχη: chance

υπάλληλα: subordinate

υποβάθρα: foundation, substrate

υπογραφή: description, delineation

υποκείμενον: underlying, subject

υπόστασις: standing under, existence, hypostasis

ύλη: matter, material

ύστερος: posterior

φάντασμα: appearance

φιλοσοφία: philosophy

φύσις: nature

φωνή (φωναί): voice, articulate sound (sounds)

χαρακτήρ: type, characteristic, character

χιών: snow

χρήσιμον: useful

χρῆσις: use

χρόνος: time

ψυχή: soul, life-principle

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